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Clear and comprehensive VIEW of the  
**G O S P E L M I N I S T R Y,**  
CALCULATED FOR THE  
USE, IMPROVEMENT and EDIFICATION  
OF THE  
**Christian World in General,**  
And **Y O U N G M I N I S T E R S** in particular;  
CAREFULLY TAKEN FROM THE  
**S A C R E D S C R I P T U R E S**  
OF THE  
**OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT,**  
And humbly recommended to the candid and  
attentive Perusal of all the  
**CHURCHES and MINISTERS of CHRIST of**  
*every* **DENOMINATION.**

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By the late Rev<sup>d</sup>. **J O H N E A D E S,**  
MINISTER of the GOSPEL.

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**L O N D O N:**

Printed for and sold by V. EADES, No. 1, Helmet-Row,  
St. Luke's, Old-Street.

**M.DCC.LXXXVII.**



Clear and comprehensive  
 G O S P E L M I N I S T R Y  
 USE IMPROVEMENT AND  
 Christian World in General  
 And Young Ministers in particular  
 CAREFULLY TAKEN FROM THE  
 SACRED SCRIPTURES



OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT  
 And highly recommended to the candid and  
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 Churches and Ministers of CHRISTIAN  
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 By the late Rev. JOHN BADGER  
 Minister of the Gospel.

L O N D O N  
 Printed for and sold by J. BADGER, No. 1, BROADWAY  
 St. James's Old Street.  
 M D C C C X X V I I I

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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE Author of the following Sheets about fourteen Years ago, conceiving the Work of the Gospel Ministry to be of the utmost Importance, drew up a few Ideas for his own private Use; and the more he thought of its Nature, the more affected he was therewith; he therefore enlarged his Plan, by which he reaped no small Advantage to himself; and having shewed the same to Persons of different Sentiments in Religion, who were severally pleased to signify their hearty Approbation of the Work, he was thereby induced to revise the whole, in order to render his Undertaking fit for Publication, in hopes, when that was accomplished, his arduous Labours, which cost him many Years Study, and which were attended with no small Expense, might be crowned not only with a Blessing to those Persons who were designed to engage in the Ministerial Office, but also prove of very great Advantage to the Christian World at large. And to answer this grand Purpose (for the Author's first Thoughts were comprized in a very narrow Compass, although they now make a large Volume) he carefully perused every Book he could procure that was written on the Subject; but not being satisfied with human Authors, however excellent, he resolved chiefly to adhere to those Helps which might be derived from the Sacred Scriptures; accordingly he studiously read



*and perused the divine Contents, and penned down every Verse thereof that related to the Gospel Ministry; and this he did three Times over, making useful Remarks thereon; and in order that he might not omit any Thing, which ought to be taken Notice of, he made three Common-Place Books, not chusing to trust altogether to Concordances, finding them deficient in many Instances for a Work of this Nature.*

*Thus he was not so much indebted to human Helps as some Persons might naturally imagine, either in forming or prosecuting his Design; excepting indeed what he derived from Dr. Owen's Treatise on the Holy Spirit; which was made very useful in setting his Soul on Fire with Love and Zeal for the Welfare of immortal Souls; and then he was induced to peruse his Manuscripts again, and if he could think of any Thing that could tend to destroy Satan's Kingdom, he added the same.*

*Had the Author lived a little longer, he purposed to have wrote a Preface and Introduction to the following Sheets (in order to shew the Nature of the Work) as well as to have made some few Alterations in the two last Chapters; but sudden Illness, which very soon terminated in Death, prevented him from putting his Design into execution. — Whoever reads this Book will easily perceive, that the Author's Intention was not to make a Party or an Interest, but to be of Service to Persons of all Denominations; yet Antinomians of every Stamp may here find the  
very*

# P R E F A C E. v.

*very Foundation of their pernicious Tenets totally undermined, and the Reason is, because his Soul loathed their horrid Principles and Practices.*

*But not to enlarge—it may not be amiss just to observe, that it was designed to comprize the Body of this Work in 400 Pages, but an Error arising in the Calculation of the Magnitude, it was found absolutely necessary to print the latter Chapters, entitled the Second Part, on a smaller Type; for had they been continued on the same Letter as the former, the Price of the Book must unavoidably have been advanced to Ten Shillings, which might have been deemed an Imposition on the Public.*

MAY 17<sup>th</sup> 1787.

R E-



## RECOMMENDATIONS.

**I** HAVE perused this Work, at the Author's Request, and do not perceive any Thing in its Contents contrary to the Oracles of God; trusting therefore that it will, by the Divine Blessing, be of Use to the Church of God, especially younger Ministers and those that are designed for that important Office, I cannot refuse recommending it for this Purpose; and the more so, as I have the Satisfaction to find that it breathes a Catholic Spirit throughout the whole, has not the least Tendency to strengthen the middle Wall of Partition between Christians of different Denominations, but is alike calculated for the Use and Edification of all that love and preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

SPA-FIELDS,  
JAN. 6, 1786.

T. WILLS.

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*WE* whose Names are underwritten, having not only perused the Manuscript of the following Pages, but also revised the Sheets before they went to Press, do heartily recommend the same to the Public at large; believing that the Work hath a Tendency to promote the spiritual Advantage of every Reader.

MAY 22, 1787. JOHN TOWERS, Barbican.  
J. A. KNIGHT, Spa-Fields.

# C O N T E N T S.

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Secondly, from its **PROPERTIES** (as revealed in the sacred Oracles) these are in general **GOOD**;---in particular, like its adorable Author---divine, spiritual, holy, heavenly and glorious.---*Improvement by way of Meditation.*

C H A P.



## C H A P. III.—Page 99.

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#### I PETER iv. II.

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## C H A P. VII.---Page 261.

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## C H A P. VIII. — Page 299.

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## C H A P. IX. — Page 333.

## On the Spirit of Preaching.

The blessed Effects of Divine Influence are a suitable Temper and Disposition of Mind, agreeable to the Precepts and Examples of Christ, his Apostles and Prophets---wherein is considered the Exercise of all those Divine Gifts and Graces, which are proper to the Work---As a meek and humble Spirit---A bold and valiant Spirit---A sincere and faithful Spirit---A wise and prudent Spirit---A diligent and laborious Spirit---A zealous and fervent Spirit---A grave and serious Spirit---The Whole of this Discourse summed up in one Word--LOVE.

## C H A P. X. — Page 365.

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An Account of Divine Eloquence in general--proved an useful and desirable Qualification for all the Ministers of Christ.--That the Blessing of God is absolutely necessary to render even the most perfect Eloquence effectual to the spiritual Good of our Hearers:-- That no Argument can be fairly deduced from this, or any other Source, against the Use and Improvement of Eloquence; but that it affords a very strong Reason and Cause for Humility, and Dependence upon Jesus Christ.

## C H A P. XI.—Page 379.

## On the Language most becoming the Pulpit.

Eccles. xii. 10. "*The Preacher sought to find out* **ACCEPTABLE WORDS.**" -- Text explained -- Human and Divine Eloquence contrasted by the great Apostle. Reasons assigned by him for his refusing the former, and using the latter -- that the grand Design of the blessed Gospel might not be frustrated, but effectually carried into execution to the Glory of Divine Wisdom, Love, and Power, in the Salvation of Souls. -- The Holy Scriptures thoroughly furnish the Minister of Christ with the most perfect Precepts, and the most powerful Patterns and Examples of every Kind of Eloquence -- with the most plain, clear, and easy Language to instruct -- the most beautiful to captivate the Imagination -- the most sweet and musical to charm the Ear -- the most pathetick and sublime to move and raise the whole Soul. -- We must understand and feel the Purity, Simplicity, Harmony, Beauty, Energy, and Majesty of our Bibles, if we desire to be truly divinely Eloquent. -- The Precepts in general are to use pure and plain Language -- "*sound Speech that cannot be condemned*" -- "*Words easy to be understood*" -- in particular, such as are proper and peculiarly adapted to the Subject -- the Capacity of our Hearers -- the Occasion and Design of our Discourse, as well as the different Powers and Faculties of the human Soul.

## C H A P. XII.—Page 405.

## On the Eloquence of the Pulpit.

THE BEST MANNER OF DELIVERING A SERMON, as it relates to the Voice, Countenance, and Gesture, more particularly enquired into, opened, and illustrated. -- This should be entirely governed by the Subject, Occasion, and Design of our Discourse. -- The whole of our Manner, both internal and external, as far as it is just and natural, grows out of the Matter, as the Stock, Branches, Leaves, and Fruits of a Tree from its Root, or as Water flows from a Fountain. -- The several Parts, which enter into the Composition, the Thoughts, Affections, Spirit, Temper, and Disposition of our Minds, the Language and Delivery, should *all* be cast into this Mould -- or, in other Words, to speak more fully -- our Text, Sentiments, Affections, Expressions -- Tongue, Head, Face, Eyes, Hands -- every Look, Feature, and Motion, in Soul and Body, should *all* harmonize in speaking only one and the same Thing. -- The whole of this Subject comprehended in **three Words** -- **PROPORTION, DISTINCTION, VARIATION.**

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CLEAR AND COMPREHENSIVE

V I E W

OF THE

GOSPEL MINISTRY.

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INTRODUCTION.

WHEN Moses was about to build the tabernacle, we are informed that he received this solemn admonition, " See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." He must not act according to the dictates of his *own* wisdom, nor follow the inclinations of his *own* will, nor be governed by his *own* fancy or imagination; he is only a *servant*, an *instrument* in the hand of God, entirely dependant upon *his* wisdom to direct, *his* will to determine, and *his* power to carry the whole plan into execution.

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In like manner every one who attempts to write concerning the church, or worship, or ordinances of God, is equally bound to pay a close attention to his mind and will upon the subject, in whatever way he hath been pleased to reveal himself.

The unchangeable JEHOVAH is still jealous of the honour of his word; "He hath magnified it above all his name:" This is the one only sure, safe and infallible rule, which he hath given for the faith and practice of his church in every age. The holy Scriptures are not only able to make every believer *wise unto salvation*, but sufficient to make *the man of God*, the minister of Christ, *perfect*, and *thoroughly furnish him unto all good works*. Here then we tread on solid ground, and rest satisfied that as far as the divine word will bear us out, all is well.

Under the impression of these weighty considerations, with deep concern and seriousness of mind, with a sacred and reverential awe of God's word, the author of the following discourses enters upon the work. And should the Lord the SPIRIT be graciously pleased to give him understanding, smile upon this effort, and take it with the hearts of the readers into his own hands, the grand design will be answered, God will be glorified,

glorified, CHRIST magnified, sinners converted, saints edified, and my honoured brethren and fathers in the ministry have no cause to complain, that they have lost their precious time in perusing the following sheets.

In order to render the whole more plain and intelligible, before we proceed any farther, we shall determine what is here to be understood by the Gospel and the Gospel Ministry. As to the word Gospel, it is not in this place to be taken in its strict and confined sense, as *good news, or glad tidings* only; but in its largest and most extensive signification, as comprehending all the mind and will of God, which the ministers of CHRIST are commissioned to dispense. And as to the *Gospel Ministry* it may not be improperly thus defined.

The Gospel Ministry is a sacred and most important office and employment, of a divine and heavenly original and appointment, wisely and graciously designed to promote the best of all purposes, the glory of God in the conversion, edification, and salvation of souls; and consists in the due exercise of prayer, preaching the word, and the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, with the care and oversight of a church of CHRIST; which trust and



charge is committed by the LORD to men who are properly qualified, called, and separated, agreeably to the rules of his word. By virtue of which commission they derive spiritual power and authority to perform all the duties required; are laid under the most solemn obligations to fulfil their ministry; have the gracious promise of their divine Master's presence with them here, even to the end of the world, and hereafter of "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

But that the reader may not be disappointed by expecting what is foreign to the design of this work, it is thought proper further to observe, that it is not intended to enlarge upon the several branches of the above definition; but to present a view of what is contained in the sacred Scriptures, concerning the Gospel Ministry in general, and Preaching in particular, and that in such a manner as may render the work useful to all the churches and ministers of CHRIST, of every denomination.

The far greater part of what is comprised herein is equally common to the whole Church of CHRIST; and though essential, yet not peculiar or confined to Ministers; being of general and infinite concern, and  
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entering into the very life, and spirit of evangelical, experimental, and practical religion—that religion which is absolutely necessary to our enjoyment of Christ, Salvation, and eternal Glory: these great, weighty, and interesting matters, occupy the chief room, and have a more large and ample discussion in the following chapters.

In discoursing upon this subject, the method we propose to adopt is,

FIRST, to give a view of the Gospel Ministry in general; considering the author—causes—necessity—and design of the Gospel Ministry.—To take a more compleat view of its nature, principally from the names and properties ascribed to it in the New Testament—The essential and various preparatory qualifications of a minister of JESUS CHRIST, chiefly those of a gracious and moral kind, which are *common* to all his church—Those which are *peculiar* and *essential* to him as a minister—The call to the sacred office—and the divinely appointed means to be used, in order to the accomplishing of the glorious and all important end.

SECONDLY. OF PREACHING in particular; Where we shall enter into a description of the subject matter—The method of hand-

ling the different parts of a discourse—The spirit of preaching—Divine eloquence in general—The style and language most becoming the pulpit—and the best manner of delivering a sermon, agreeable to the precepts and examples of CHRIST, his prophets and apostles.



PART THE FIRST.  

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OF THE  
GOSPEL MINISTRY  
IN  
GENERAL.

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CHAP. I.

THE AUTHOR, CAUSES, NECESSITY AND  
DESIGN, OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

- § 1. *The Gospel Ministry of divine and heavenly original.* § 2. *Moving Causes—Divine Understanding, Will, and Affections, all harmonious in contriving, chusing and establishing the Gospel Ministry.* § 3. *Virtual or meritorious cause—the deep and wonderful humiliation of its adorable Author.* § 4. *The more immediate cause—his triumphant Ascension, and glorious Exaltation at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.*

§ 5. *The efficient cause of all the good that is done in the Gospel Ministry, either in or by the persons concerned, is God himself; this is particularly the office and province of the Holy Spirit.* § 6. *The Gospel Ministry, and Ministers considered as the principal ordinary means and instrumental causes, which God is pleased to use and bless for carrying on the grand design of his wisdom, love and goodness towards his church and people.* § 7. *The final cause is either subordinate or ultimate; subordinate, as it respects the Church in their conversion, edification and salvation; or the rise, progress, and perfection of every member, and the whole body of CHRIST in their spiritual and eternal enjoyment of him.—*

*As it respects the Angels, the intention of the Gospel Ministry is to increase their knowledge, wisdom, love, joy, admiration, and praises to all eternity.—The ultimate end is the glory of God, the display of all his perfections in general; but in particular, his wisdom, love, and power.* § 8. *The necessity of the Gospel Ministry.* § 9. *A meditation upon its design.*

§ 1. **N**EITHER men or angels, but God himself is the Author, both of the Gospel and the GOSPEL MINIS-

**MINISTRY.** That it is not of *men*, we may rest assured, if we credit the words of an inspired writer, Gal. i. 11. *I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me, is not after Man.* No, we may with propriety adopt the language of Isaiah and Paul, when speaking of the rich blessings of the Gospel: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways, and God's thoughts than our thoughts" Isa. lv. 20. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" 1 Cor. ii. 9. All human skill and conception fail here. And as to *angels*, though they are all ministring spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation, yet they are not the authors either of the Gospel or the Gospel Ministry. It is true, those *morning stars that sang together, those sons of God that shouted for joy at the first creation*, have been so highly favoured and honoured as to publish its wonderful contents, *Glory to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men*; Luke ii. 14. Yet he alone, whose name is **JEHOVAH**, ever claims the praise of being the author of the Gospel Ministry, both in the ordinary and extra-



extraordinary dispensation of it. In this place we consider it in both views, though our business is more especially with the former. The same adorable Being who made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth, the sea, and all that is therein, and preserveth them all; who contrived also the wonderful plan of our redemption, and clearly and fully revealed it by his prophets and apostles in the Old and New Testament; the same adorable Being, who is the author of the holy Scriptures, is the author of the Gospel Ministry; the divine Original of both stand or fall together; what is asserted of the *former* in general, 2 Tim. iii. 16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," is equally true of the *latter* in particular. Accordingly the prophets David, Isaiah, and Micah, unite in the same declaration; "Out of Zion shall go forth the law\*, and the word of the LORD, from Jerusalem.

\* "The law and word of the LORD." By each of these phrases we may understand the whole subject of the apostles ministry, all the counsel of God; and not merely the ten commandments; or any separate part of divine revelation. If only the *moral law* were meant, we must be left in a state of condemnation; as disobedient to the precepts, we must endure the penalty: If only the *gospel*, taken in a *limited* sense, were to be published, this would be, through faith, to *make void the law*: or, in other words, if only the *moral law* were meant, it would be  
more

rusalem. The LORD gave the word, great was the company of them that published it." Isa. ii. 3. Mic. iv. 2. Psalm lxviii. 11. May the LORD of hosts increase their number; unite them together as the heart of one man; and make all his ministers and churches "terrible as an army with banners!"

We cannot help admiring the spirit of the blessed apostle, in his affectionate address to the Thessalonians, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God," 1 Thess. ii. 13. Nor is the testimony of his highly favoured brother, who accompanied his divine Master, on the holy mount, less worthy of our regard and attention; "We have not (says Peter, speaking for the rest as well as himself) followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, but were

more proper to have said, out of Sinai, than out of Zion: If only the *gospel*, there would have been no necessity to mention *the law*; but both are absolutely necessary. The infinite holiness of God demands *obedience to the former*; and the infinite love and grace of God provide the *latter*, *glad tidings of deliverance from the curse of the law*. But at the same time, as glad tidings to every pardoned, renewed soul of Grace, to enable him to *love and live* the law.

were eye-witnesses of his Majesty ;" that is, we did not walk in craftiness ; our gospel was not the fruit of light and empty fancy, but full of great, important, and heavenly realities, which we saw and knew to be true, and had from God himself ; even the " THREE that bear record in heaven ;" for each divine Person is, according to Scripture, the author of the Gospel Ministry.

GOD the FATHER, Heb. i. 1. " GOD who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." The chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls informs us, that not only his qualifications *for*, his call and consecration *to* the office, but the excellent ministry he received, and all which he delivered, was from his heavenly Father. Matt. xiv. 27.

We are divinely authorized to say of every part of the Gospel Ministry, as the beloved disciple does of the last book of the New Testament, " The revelation of JESUS CHRIST, which GOD gave unto him." The same adorable Person, who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son for our redemption and salvation, freely bestows upon us also his word, and the Gospel Ministry, as the blessed means of its application. He gives



gives to his churches Pastors after his own heart. Jer. iii. 15.

Our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, as one with the Father and Holy Spirit, though distinct as to his person, office, and agency, in the work of our redemption, is also the author of the Gospel Ministry. Accordingly the Evangelist Mark sets out with this express testimony, "The beginning of the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD." Chap. i. 1. He is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" a partaker of the same nature, in whom dwells "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," and therefore not only infinitely dear to him, but in a most incomprehensible, wonderful and glorious manner, perfectly and eternally united with him in the same mind; and one who knows all that is in GOD the Father; Matt. xi. 27. and ever thinks, speaks and acts in perfect conjunction with him, and the eternal Spirit, The great apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians (agreeably to what has been already observed) that none might imagine his ministry and apostleship were of *human* or *angelic* invention, or that he received his knowledge of the Gospel, with his qualifications and

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commission to preach it, from any but God, with the utmost zeal and solemnity, and in the most strong and determinate language, enlarges on the subject before us. Gal. i. 1.

“ Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by JESUS CHRIST, and God the Father, ver. 11, 12. “ I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of JESUS CHRIST.” Here it may be remarked, that this is no argument against the ministers of CHRIST’s using all appointed means to become *scribes, well instructed in the kingdom of GOD*: nor does it in the least countenance any persons expecting, even to the end of time, any new outward revelation; the rule of prophecy is now compleat and entire, wanting nothing; but it affords a striking proof of the divine original of the Gospel Ministry.

We have also the clearest evidence in Scripture, that CHRIST is the author of the Gospel Ministry, not only as God, but as God-man-mediator. In this wonderful office and capacity, he is the appointed “ heir of all things.” Heb. i. 2. Unto him is delivered all power in heaven and in earth. Matt. xxviii. 16. The child born, the son given, is not  
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only, as his name is called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; but he has the government upon his shoulders." Isa. ix. 6. By virtue of his infinite condescension, and humiliation in his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross; ALL the concerns of the church are with infinite complacency and satisfaction committed by his Divine Father to his care; as one who is both able and willing perfectly to accomplish his glorious designs, and eternally worthy of being exalted to the highest honours, and having "a name above every name." Phil. ii. 5—11. Here we may learn one grand reason of that wonderful testimony of infinite affection given by his Father's voice from heaven, and of the SPIRIT's descending like a dove, and lighting upon him at his baptism and transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Matt. iii. 16, 17. xvii. 5. Oh! what a sanction does this give to his ministry! Heb. xii. 25. How awful and tremendous to reject it! Yes; it is in this office and capacity, as God-man-mediator, upon the account of what he has already done, of what he is now doing, and will continue to do, as our representative, to the end of the

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the world: it is upon this account that he receives from his heavenly Father, and graciously bestows upon all his churches in every age of the world, the Gospel Ministry, Pf. lxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 8—18. 1 Cor. iii. 15. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 12, 23. Thus it appears that CHRIST, not only as one with the FATHER, and the HOLY SPIRIT, but as MEDIATOR, is *both the author of eternal salvation*, and all the means that lead to the participation and enjoyment of this glorious end. It was CHRIST that said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15. In a word, the *Gospel Ministry*, I speak of it now as it was received, delivered, and preserved by the apostles and prophets, and given to us in their holy writings; the Gospel Ministry, like the pure river of water of life, proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

The HOLY GHOST, as one with the Father and the Son, is also expressly declared the Author of the Gospel Ministry: we have many infallible proofs, that not only the whole of divine revelation in general, but the Ministry of the Gospel in particular, is expressly ascribed to him as the Author. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved

moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. i. 21. The mystery of CHRIST, i. e. the Gospel, is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit. Eph. iii. 4, 5. What David says of himself is true of all the other prophets and apostles, "the Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was on my tongue." This is what the apostle calls "the sword of the Spirit;" Eph. vi. 17. And speaking of the Gospel, as distinguished from the moral law, "the ministration of the Spirit;" 2 Cor. iii. 8. Not only as the Gospel, "the spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS," was, and is, by the agency of the Holy Ghost, revealed in the hearts of all believers to their recovery and salvation; but because he is the heavenly author and revealer. 1 Cor. ii. 10.

The apostle Peter declares, that it was the spirit of CHRIST, under the Old Testament, which testified to the apostles under the New; and we have a right to say, by their ministry to all succeeding ages, these great, affecting, glorious, all-important things, "which the angels desire to look into." 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5. "Differences of administrations (as the Old and New Testament, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, the

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law and gospel : all things to be known, believed, and practised ; all that relate to the worship and ordinances of GOD) but the same LORD ; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same GOD, who worketh all in all."

The sum of what we have opened and proved is this ; that what the apostle seems particularly to apply to the GOD and Father of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, in 2 Cor. v. 18. is equally ascribed in the holy Scriptures to the Son, "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and "the Spirit, who searches and knows all things ; yea, the deep things of GOD." 1 Cor. ii. 10.

"All things are of GOD." Not only all things in nature and providence, but all things in grace and glory ; all things that concern his worship ; all things that relate to his Church ; the holy Scriptures, and every part of the Gospel Ministry. Prayer—Preaching the word---Baptism---the Lord's Supper---every ordinance of the Gospel, and whatever pertains to the officers, who administer them, with one harmonious voice proclaim the same heavenly and divine original. 1 Tim. ii. 1—8. Acts vi. 4. 1 Cor. xv. 3. 1 Tim. i. 1, 11. Gal. i. 11, 12. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.  
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Matt. xxi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. xi. 23. Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

§ 2. Having proved the Gospel Ministry to be of divine and heavenly original and extraction, we are naturally led to enquire more particularly into the moving causes.

We have signified in the contents on this head, that the divine understanding, will, and affections, *all* harmonize in contriving, chusing, and establishing the Gospel Ministry; and if we *duly consider* the subject, press forward in our meditations, even to the utmost bounds, wherever the Gospel Ministry shall extend in all its gracious and glorious effects, and follow those sacred streams back to their fountain head, we shall be *constrained* to break out with holy wonder and admiration. “ Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,” Rom. xi. 33. More or less not only of the unfearchable wisdom, but the gracious and sovereign will, and unbounded love and affection of a covenant God in CHRIST, will evidently appear.

The wisest of men assure us, that every purpose or design is established, *fixed, and settled upon a firm and proper basis* by counsel. And the chief of all the apostles affirms, that

GOD <sup>s</sup> worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." *All things* that he does in nature, providence and grace: this seems to be intended to give us a most humbling and affecting view of the wonderful deliberation of GOD, speaking after the manner of men, in the whole of his operations, to shew us, that all his proceedings are according to the *unsearchable* rules of his own unerring wisdom, and done (if I may be allowed the expression) "in measure, and weight, and number," as well as to shew us the importance of the work; and if *all things*, then of course those things that stand more immediately connected with his glory and our enjoyment of him.

The same GOD, who from the beginning chose his people to salvation, hath ordained and appointed all the means that lead to its participation and enjoyment, 2 Theff. ii. 13, 14. Hence it is said "through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Herein the wonderful Counsellor is eminently concerned--The apostle calls the Gospel itself, "the counsel of GOD," Acts xx. 27. *Here* then with reverence we may say is a  
counsel

counsel held in the bosom of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, not only about the peace and reconciliation of the world with and to himself, but the means of its application; or in other words, as beforementioned, the divine wisdom, divine will, and divine affections, all harmonize in contriving, chusing and establishing the Gospel Ministry.

DIVINE WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING. The Gospel Ministry is not the fruit of human or angelick fancy, but the contrivance of infinite wisdom; hence in 1 Cor. ii. 7. it is called "the wisdom of God in a mystery; herein he hath abounded towards his church in all wisdom and prudence." Eph. i. 8. We speak not here *particularly* of the wisdom of God in finding out a ransom, and reconciling all his perfections in the salvation of his people, but of his wisdom, in suiting the Gospel Ministry, as a mean to accomplish this glorious purpose. Though on the one hand it is a melancholy truth, that "the preaching of CHRIST crucified is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" yet on the other, it is a most comfortable reflection, that "unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST is the wisdom of God;"



1 Cor. i. 21—25. Thus the Gospel Ministry appears to be a plan contrived by infinite wisdom,—“ Wisdom hath builded her house she hath hewn out her seven pillars ; she hath killed her beasts ; she hath mingled her wine ; she hath also furnished her table ; she hath sent forth her maidens ; she crieth upon the highest places of the city, whoso is simple, let him turn in hither ; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of the bread, and drink of the wine, which I have mingled ; forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding.”—We will just mention a few instances, without enlarging upon this head, confining ourselves at present to the ministry of the word, and the ordinances of Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. As to the Ministry of the word, we may here behold the blessed God making use of the same means in the recovery and salvation of fallen man, that Satan used for his ruin and destruction.—The serpent, by his infernal eloquence, found a way to the souls of our first parents through their senses ; the ear in particular was an avenue to the heart ; so it is in preaching the Gospel ; so hath the wisdom of God ordained, that righteousness and life should  
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enter by the same means that sin and death entered, "faith cometh by hearing,"—"it pleased God, (says the apostle) by the foolishness of preaching" (as the world calls it) to save them that believe."—Next to this we might mention the wonderful propriety and majestic simplicity of the elements of water, bread and wine, appointed to be made use of in those ordinances. What could more plainly imply, or clearly express our natural pollution by sin, and our cleansing by the blood of CHRIST, than the use of water in baptism? or what in all the world more fully shew forth the LORD's death, and it's blessed effects, than the elements of bread broken, and wine poured out, and received by believing souls? May we not say, by these means, CHRIST is evidently set forth as openly crucified before our eyes? Thus, with the disciple who lay in his bosom, without the shadow of idolatry, "Our eyes see, our hands handle, and our mouths *spiritually* taste of the word of life."---As our first parents saw, took, and eat of the tree of knowledge, which brought temporal, spiritual and eternal death upon mankind, so in these elements, by faith, we behold the tree of life really good for food, pleasant to the sight, a tree to be desired to make one wise unto

salvation; we take and eat the fruits of this tree, and feel the virtue of these leaves, which are for *the healing of the nations*; nor is there any prohibition here; nay, we have a sincere and hearty invitation—"Eat, O my friends, and drink abundantly, my beloved."—The more we consider and understand the Gospel Ministry, the more we shall see of the wisdom of God in all the means he has chosen to accomplish his designs, both in the subject matter and in the manner through the whole work.

DIVINE WILL. "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," to speak after the manner of men (for so the blessed God often speaks to us in his word) we may safely assert, what the divine wisdom sees and judges best, that the divine will fixes upon, chuses and determines to bring to pass---CHRIST himself, we are told, "was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." And Paul, a chosen vessel and an apostle, by the will of God, 1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Tim. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. Thus it appears, that God was pleased in and ordained the work, as well as the persons he separated for it. The counsel of his will in eternity (as far as it is for his glory and our good for us to know) is revealed to us in time  
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by his word.---We are assured, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are all united here, not only in contriving, but in chusing and fixing unchangeably the wonderful plan; so that we may join with the angels in their Song at the Redeemer's Birth, and apply it to the Gospel Ministry, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men;" Luke ii. 14.

DIVINE AFFECTIONS. We are now arrived at the fountain-head of our subject; as well as of all other spiritual and eternal blessings. The *love, grace, mercy, and compassion* of a covenant GOD in CHRIST is the moving cause of all——What the queen of Sheba once said to Solomon, "Because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king," may justly be said of a Gospel Ministry, because the LORD loved Israel "with an everlasting love," therefore hath he ordained a Gospel Ministry, and given to his churches "pastors after his own heart, to feed them with knowledge and understanding:" Therefore it is called, "the Gospel of the grace of God." The whole plan of our salvation, every thing that belongs to the execution of this wonderful contrivance, the application and consummation, are all entirely of grace,

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In reality, it is through the tender mercy of our God, that we have the Gospel Ministry, that we are not like most of the nations upon earth, "sitting in darkness and the shadow of death." All the churches of CHRIST under heaven may with equal propriety say, as those in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. "The reason the LORD GOD of our fathers sends to us by his messengers is because he has compassion on his people and his dwelling place."

Is the church raised up, edified, and preserved upon earth? Is the work of grace begun and carrying on in their hearts? Is the arm of the LORD revealed? In a word, do they enjoy the Gospel Ministry, in all its purity and power? Are they called by it to his kingdom and glory? 2 Theff. ii. 13. Would we know the original moving cause? The apostle in Acts xx. 24, Eph. iii. 8, fully assures us that it is entirely of Grace.

Thus the ordinance of the Gospel Ministry as well as all other divine institutions, which are stiled means of grace, are not only means to obtain *grace*, but flow from *grace*.

All this will appear more fully, if we consider,

§ 3. The procuring cause of the Gospel Ministry.—The wonderful and astonishing humi-

humiliation of JESUS CHRIST is the ground and basis of his glorious exaltation at the right hand of God ; of all that power which is delivered to him by his Father, both in heaven and in earth ; or in other words, the execution of his all-important office, as a Priest, is the meritorious cause of all his power and authority as a King. I mean not here, only King of kings, but King of saints, King of Sion, King in his church ; so that by his obedience even unto death, he hath not only purchased the church with his blood, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, but the means of its application, the Gospel Ministry, to render it effectual by his Holy Spirit to their salvation ; so that we are debtors, eternal debtors to him “ who bore our sins and carried our sorrows, in his own body on the tree,” both for the means and the end ; the reconciliation itself, and “ the Ministry of reconciliation.”—Thus CHRIST not only revealed it as a Prophet, and the Wonderful Counsellor by his word and spirit ; but “ he left the bosom of his Father,” he was manifest in the flesh, he emptied himself, he lived and died that we might enjoy it, that he might “ fill all things ;” Heb. viii. 6. Eph. ii. 18. that he might fill his churches with ministers,



nisters, fill them with all divine gifts and graces, fill his people with *all the fulness of God*.—This is one important branch of the glory that arises out of the cross, and follows the sufferings of CHRIST.—This stamps an honour, a dignity upon it, which will raise it in the value of redeemed souls to all eternity.

We now come to consider.

§ 4. The more immediate cause,—his triumphant ascension and glorious exaltation at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

When the captain of salvation had obtained a compleat victory over all our spiritual enemies in his own person, as a glorious conqueror amidst the numerous assembly of worshipping angels, entered triumphantly into the holy and beloved city, the new and heavenly Jerusalem—when the great Prophet of the church returned home to his chair, the great High Priest to his temple, and the King of kings to his throne of glory, he was not unmindful of his *church* and people, The honours of his triumphs, in the heights of *his prosperity*, did not make him forgetful of *his people*, in the depths of their adversity ;—he was not so dazzled with the sight of the many crowns, which were then to be set upon his glorified head above, as to overlook

look the distressed situation of any of his members here below:—No; they were still deep engraven as the names of the children of Israel upon Aaron's breast plate, and warm upon his heart, as when he travailed in the garden, and bled upon the cross, for their salvation.—A *display*, a most glorious *display* of this wonderful love and affection is clear and manifest in the heavenly provision he hath made for them in the institution,—but above all in the enjoyment of the Gospel Ministry. John xiv. 15, 16.

We are assured by one who took his text (Psal. lxxviii. 18.) from the man after God's own heart, and was himself for awhile “caught up into paradise, into the third heavens,” that when “he ascended on high, he received gifts for, he gave gifts to men.” More or less in every age, he had bestowed the same blessing upon his church and people; yet the great displays of his wisdom, love, and power, seem to be reserved until the time of his departure from this world to his heavenly Father.—As some victorious general or prince returning home from the field of battle into his city and place of abode bountifully scatters his royal donations—so Jesus, the Prince of peace, of life and glory, having gained a compleat victory over all our  
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spiritual enemies, and received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, in all his rich and manifold gifts and graces, shed them forth abundantly — *He gave gifts to men*; all spiritual blessings; every thing that can make them holy in time, and happy in eternity;—and in order to carry on these blessed purposes, in particular, a Gospel Ministry.—This is the gift of an ascended Redeemer. The persons, qualifications, all the work and labours of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, from the beginning to the end of the world, must be traced forward and backward to this grand period; yes; we are under eternal obligations to Jesus, an ascended Jesus, for the Gospel Ministry. Isa. lix. 21. Matt. xxviii. 20.

§ 5. The efficient cause of all the good that is done in the Gospel Ministry, either in or by the persons concerned, is God himself; this is particularly the office, and province of the Holy Spirit;—a large and copious subject—of infinite consequence to the souls of men—abundantly manifest through the whole Scripture.

As we intend, in the second part of this work, a distinct Chapter on the Spirit of Preaching, as it principally respects the minister



nister of CHRIST, we shall here confine ourselves chiefly to what regards the church in general ; and be content at present with a concise view of the subject, by producing and explaining a few of the most apt and pertinent Scriptures from the Old and New Testament, and then applying them to the case in hand.

PROOFS. To this purpose, we have a most remarkable promise made to the first Old Testament prophet Moses, Gen. xx. 24. " In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee : " --- This promise hath been, is, and will be made good to the end of the world. This is particularly referred to by the evangelical prophet ; Isa. iv. 5. " The LORD will create upon every dwelling - place of Mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud of smok by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night ; for upon all the glory (i. e. the word, worship, ordinances, church, and ministers of Christ ; this is the glory intended) shall be a defence ; " they shall be divinely protected and preserved to the end of time : agreeable to this, we have a most remarkable history of the apostle's success in preaching the Gospel ;

pel; after CHRIST's ascension, they went forth and preached every where, according to their commission in Matt. xxviii. 19. It is added, "the LORD working with them;" Mark xvi. 20. The blessed effect of this is described more particularly in Acts xi. 21. "The hand of the LORD being with them" is declared to be the cause of the great number that believed and turned to the LORD. "I have planted (says the great apostle) Apollos watered, but GOD gave the increase." 1 Cor. iii. 6. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of GOD, and not of us; 2 Cor. iv. 7. The weapons of our warfare are mighty, through GOD;" 2 Cor. x. 4. Isa. lxi. 3. 1 Cor. iii. 9.

The FATHER, agreeable to that wonderful passage in Eph. i. 17---20. "That the GOD of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the FATHER of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him;" compared with Eph. iii. 14---19. John vi. 44. 2 Thess. ii. 14.

CHRIST himself, Zech. vi. 12. "Behold he shall build the temple of the LORD, and he shall bear the Glory---Upon this rock will I build my Church---CHRIST reveals the Father, Matt. xi. 27. Makes his people

ple willing in the day of his power;" Psal.cx.3. and draws off their affections from earthly and temporal to spiritual and heavenly things.

This is particularly the office and province of the HOLY SPIRIT. — What was said of the temple, Zech. iv. 6. is equally true in this case; "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts."

Not only the outward revelation of the Word, as already shewn, but the inward revelation of it upon the heart, is expressly ascribed to the HOLY SPIRIT; Ezek. xxxvi. 25—38.---"Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of GOD, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD." 1 Cor. ii. 12. They preached the Gospel not only under his infallible guidance, direction and influence themselves, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, which was largely promised under the Old Testament, more abundantly bestowed at the day of Pentecost, and always poured out under the New Testament, wherever there was any spiritual good done. Hence, says Paul, "Our Gospel came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost;" we  
D preached



preached in the Spirit, you heard in the Spirit, and the Holy Ghost came along with the Gospel into your hearts; 1 Theff. i. 5. And Oh! what glorious work does it make there! what glorious effects follow! 2 Cor. x. 4. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Hosea xiv. 5, 6, 7. Psal. lxxxvii. 5. and numerous other places, both in the Old and New Testament, of which we cannot here speak particularly.

### IMPROVEMENT.

IS GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the efficient cause of all the good that is done in or by the Ministers of CHRIST?—What abundant reason is here for deep humility, and a constant abiding sense of our entire dependence upon the same HOLY SPIRIT, that first inspired the sacred Scripture to work both in and with us mightily! Surely the heart-felt language of David equally becomes the most able and most successful Ministers of CHRIST in every age---“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to thy Name be all the Praise;” Psal. cxv. 1. Should not these considerations awaken in our souls more earnestness, fervency

veny and importunity in prayer, for every blessing a covenant God has graciously promised in his Word.—Oh! let us never forget the precept, nor omit the duty.—“I will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do those things for them.” Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

“Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits.”

—“Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live;” Ezek. xxxvii. 9. What a deep and wonderful impression this part of our subject had upon the mind of the apostle!—

Never I believe was more enlargedness of heart, affection for CHRIST, concern for his glory, love to his church, and intense desire for their conversion, edification and salvation, than breathes in Eph. iii. 14—21.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST; of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named;—that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that CHRIST may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being

rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height ; — and to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us ; unto him be glory in the church by CHRIST JESUS, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

Oh ! how should this excite, animate and stir us up to the same important duty and delightful practice ! Should we not all unite in the meek and lowly spirit of the great apostle, and earnestly engage both the churches and ministers of CHRIST on our account ? — “ Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the LORD may have free course, and be glorified ; ” 2 Theff. iii. 1.

§ 6. The Gospel Ministry and Ministers considered, as the principal ordinary means and instrumental causes, which God is pleased to use and bless, for carrying on the grand designs of his wisdom, love, and goodness, towards his church and people. — What the LORD says of Ephraim in Hosea vi. 5. and xi. 4. “ I have hewed them



them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth, I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love" (though the former may originally intend the dreadful judgments which God denounced and executed upon the impenitent Jews, and the latter the tender mercies of our God, in the various kind and gentle means he made use of for their recovery) may with equal propriety be said of the Gospel Ministry, in the conviction and persuasion of sinners to come to CHRIST.—God hews them by the prophets; fits and prepares them for the spiritual building; hence says Paul, "I have planted, Apollos watered;" here are the instruments and means---labourers together with God.---He wrought *in* them, fitted and furnished them for their work; and wrought *with* them, and they by virtue of his agency and energy, in subordination to him, were the highly favoured, honoured instruments of planting, watering, laying the foundation, and building up the churches of CHRIST.

We are naturally led to observe, on the one hand, how jealous the apostle was, lest his hearers should ascribe that to themselves which

entirely belongs to GOD—I Cor. iii. 5.  
 “ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos,  
 but ministers by whom ye believed?”—What  
 great and mighty beings do you consider us to  
 be? We are servants, we cannot bear to eclipse  
 the glory of our divine master; we point you  
 to look from all instruments to the agent—  
 from all second causes to the first cause—  
 whatever we are as men, or Christians, or  
 Ministers, we have nothing but what we have  
 received—“ by the grace of GOD we are what  
 we are.”—We can do nothing independant  
 of our LORD and Master; all our sufficiency  
 is of him, and we are no more to you than  
 what he is pleased to make us.—On the  
 other hand, we should be careful to consider  
 the ministers of CHRIST in their proper place,  
 and prize and value the means in proportion  
 to the ends of their institution. Eph. iv.  
 11—16.—Should we not esteem the golden  
 pipes for the sake of the golden oil they con-  
 tain? Zech. iv. 2—12.—Nay; should we not  
 prize even earthen vessels for the sake of the  
 heavenly treasure that is in them?

The Gospel is the Gospel of salvation (Eph.  
 i. 13.) by which lost sinful men are called to  
 the obtaining the glory of our LORD JESUS  
 CHRIST; this speaks in a most astonishing  
 manner its excellency—only look forward to  
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the end, and you will see with wonder the value you ought to put upon the means; in despising the means we despise the end; in trifling with the Ministers of CHRIST, we trifle with GOD and our own souls, and take his name in vain; in neglecting the means, we forsake the fountain of living waters, and turn aside from the LORD—"Thy way, O GOD, is in the sanctuary." Psal. lxxvii. 13.

When the glory of GOD then is no longer near and dear to him, when the blood of his Son is no longer precious and valuable in his esteem, when his Holy and Eternal Spirit no longer resents the injury, when the salvation of the soul is no longer of any importance, then, and not till then, go and trifle with the Gospel Ministry.

§ 7. The final cause is either subordinate or ultimate; subordinate, as it respects the *church* in their conversion, edification and salvation, or the rise, progress, and perfection of every member, and the whole body of CHRIST, in their spiritual and eternal enjoyment of him.—Agreeable to this, the Man after GOD's own heart declares, that the grand design of CHRIST's receiving gifts for men (i. e. the Gospel Ministry in particular) was "that the LORD GOD might dwell among them;" Psal. lxxviii. 18. that they might enjoy his graci-



ous and spiritual presence to the end of the world ; that he might dwell in their bodies as his temple, in their hearts by faith, that they might be made meet for “ the inheritance of the saints in light,” and dwell with him for ever in heaven. Accordingly the apostle declares, that pastors and teachers are given “ for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST ;” Eph. iv, 11, 12.—“ The perfecting of the saints”—i. e, either, first, to fit and prepare all those whom he is pleased to call to this good work, to perform it in a due manner ; or, secondly (as it may respect the people committed to them) it intends the rise, progress, and perfection of every member and the whole body of CHRIST, in their spiritual and eternal enjoyment of him—or, in other words, “ the edifying of the body of Christ;” laying the foundation, raising the superstructure, and finishing the whole building;—This consists in their union to CHRIST and one another—their growth and confirmation in knowledge and likeness to CHRIST—their order, and the encrease of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

As it respects the *angels*, the intention of the Gospel Ministry is to encrease their knowledge, wisdom, love, joy, admiration and  
praises

praises to all eternity.—Angels, though to us invisible, are present in the Church of CHRIST; but notwithstanding all the perfection of their wisdom “ the manifold wisdom of God,” displayed in the Gospel—the sufferings and glory of its adorable author, are things which “ the angels desire to look into.”—Whatever wisdom they discover in the works of nature or providence, here in redemption, they have the greatest manifestation of the deep, hidden, mysterious, manifold, transcendent, abundant wisdom of GOD; in a word, all wisdom and prudence.—But their knowledge is not merely speculative; No;—it is all of a spiritual and heavenly nature; the more they know of GOD, the more they love him; they cannot hear of the contrivance of our redemption, they cannot attend the execution of this wonderful plan, they cannot minister in the application of it, without love;—and what they know and love, they enjoy; Yes; “ there is joy in heaven amongst the *angels* of GOD over one sinner that repenteth;” Lukexv.7,10. They enjoy their ministry to the heirs of salvation all the time of their pilgrimage here on earth, to serve both body and soul; nor will they leave their charge in the hour of death, but joyfully carry them into Abraham’s bosom, and collect them all together

gether in the judgment of the great day.  
Pfal. l. 5.

At the first creation (as before observed) those “ morning stars sang together ”—all those “ sons of God shouted for joy ; ”—but Oh ! what joy will swell their notes when all the heirs of salvation shall be put into the full possession of their privileges ! Yes ; Heaven will eternally resound with their song ; “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Rev. v. 12. Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 11. Luke xv. 10.

The ultimate end is the *Glory of God*, the display of all his perfections in general, but in particular, his wisdom, love, and power.—“ When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.” Psal. cii. 16.

The one grand design of God in all his thoughts, words, and actions, in all the worship he has instituted, and every part of the Gospel Ministry, is his own glory.—I do not mean here his essential glory ; no ; he is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, his persons, and perfections ; nor is it possible that any thing without can make the least addition to, or diminution from his essential glory.—The ruin or recovery  
of



of a world, ten thousand worlds ; the united eternal songs of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of saints on earth, and seraphims in heaven, that surround his throne, or their everlasting silence, can never affect his happiness, who is " exalted above all blessing and praise : " No ; the every way glorious G O D would have all his creatures understand, that his happiness does not depend upon them, nor their goodness extend to him ; it cannot possibly make him better, or add any thing to infinite perfection, but that their life, their being, and all their blessings, depend entirely upon him. 1 Cor. x. 31. Eph. iii. 21. Psal. cxv. 1. Isa. lxi. 3. Therefore when we say, according to the sacred Scriptures, that the design of G O D in the Gospel Ministry is his own Glory, we understand that the infinite, independant, all-sufficient, and every way glorious J E H O V A H, by this mean, intends to declare or manifest his Glory ; for this purpose he made heaven, the heaven of heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is therein ; for this he reigns, rules, and directs every thing in Providence ; but above all, for this noble purpose was the wonderful plan of Redemption contrived, executed and accomplished ;  
the

the council of peace held; the covenant of grace entered into, settled and established; for this the Redeemer never rested, until he could say, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do:" John xvii. 4. Phil. ii. 6--11.

With reverence I add, that which lies nearest the heart of GOD the FATHER, and is the very joy and delight of his soul, is the Glory of CHRIST as Mediator.—*The Glory of Christ*; I mean that Glory which he had with him before the foundation of the world; that Glory which he prayed for in the days of his flesh; that Glory which he now possesses by his Spirit, and that Glory which he shall receive and his Church behold to all eternity. And is there not a cause?—Certainly; from him he receives the greatest revenue of Honour and Glory. "Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name." The Father glorifies the Son, and delights to behold heaven and earth bow the knee before him.

The great business of the HOLY GHOST, in this world is to carry on the same grand design—to glorify CHRIST, to receive of his Redemption, and to apply it to the hearts  
of

of his people, that the sons and daughters of fallen Adam, out of every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue, and People, with one heart and voice may unite in ascribing Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing, unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." Gen. xiii. 14—18. xv. 5. Rev. v. 12, 13.

§ 8. ON THE NECESSITY OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.—By Necessity here, we do not mean, that the independant, all-sufficient JEHOVAH can possibly stand in need of the Ministry or Ministers, or any thing, as we have already observed, without himself, to constitute his essential happiness; no; this is contrary to the scripture idea of his infinite perfection; our souls rise with indignation at the narrow-contracted, God-dishonouring thought.—He could, if he pleased, convert the sinner, edify the faint, seek, find and save lost and perishing souls without either; but we understand, that God himself, by his own institution of the Gospel Ministry, has made it necessary, as a gracious and glorious mean, most wisely and wonderfully adapted to answer all the ends of his Wisdom.

Love



Love and Power, in the application of the Redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST, and the communication of all the rich, free, promised, purchased spiritual blessings of the new and everlasting covenant.—As a proof of this, we solemnly appeal to the Law and the Testimony of the wisest and best of men under the Old and New Testament; and above all, to its divine and heavenly Author.—Solomon declares, that where no vision is the people perish; Prov. xxix. 18. Paul breaks out in the most tremendous language, “Necessity is laid upon me; yea; wo is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.” 1 Cor. ix. 16. It is as though he had said, My office as a Minister---the solemn obligations I am laid under to fulfil it---the dreadful curses I deserve, if I neglect my duty---the peace of my own mind—the love I bear to my LORD—the spread and establishment of his kingdom—the ruin of Satan’s empire—Acts xxvi. 18.—the conversion, edification, and salvation of the Church, and above all what is inseparably connected with this, the highest Glory of my divine Master;—all with one united voice loudly call upon me to preach the Gospel.

But,

But a greater than Solomon or Paul declares, that the Gospel *must* be published among all nations; Mark xiii. 10. “Wist you not (says the blessed Jesus) that I must be about my Father’s business? Luke ii. 49. I must (says the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls) work the works of him that sent me, while it is day;” John ix. 4.

Here let us make a solemn pause, and learn carefully to distinguish between the work of this glorious Person, as a prophet, and as a priest and king.—We said before, that God could, if he pleased, convert and save souls without the Gospel Ministry; but this is not the case; with the deepest reverence we repeat it, this is not the case with respect to the work of CHRIST as our substitute—there was an absolute, indispensable necessity for his obedience even unto death; nor must this necessity be wholly resolved into the will and appointment of God, though he was delivered according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge. But such is the very nature of God, that infinite justice offended must have a satisfaction adequate to its high demands, or there can be no Redemption for one of  
Adam’s

Adam's race, though the Captain of our Salvation, the Lord of Glory, was a volunteer (and what can more enhance his love?) a volunteer through the whole of his obedience and sufferings.—And can we forbear admiring the boundless Wisdom that contrived such an atonement, the unparalleled infinite love, that constrained the independant JEHOVAH-JESUS, the only begotten Son of GOD, to carry the wonderful contrivance into execution, and the almighty power displayed, in the accomplishment of the whole plan!—But to return to the subject in hand—The disciple who lay in his bosom declares, “ he must needs go through Samaria;” John iv. 4.—but why must he needs go? if we read on as far as the 43d verse, we shall find the reason—A certain woman, and many other precious souls in that city, speak the cause; the Gospel was necessary in order to their conversion and salvation; and JESUS went there to preach it.—“ How shall they (says the Apostle) believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” Rom. x. 14. We might easily illustrate this point, by the inseparable connexion of the means with the end, in order to *temporal* salvation—probably you anticipate what I



am going to say ; you may remember *Paul's voyage*, and the express promise he had by an angel from heaven of the preservation of his *own life* and the *lives of the mariners*, who sailed with him. Acts xxvii. 22---31. — Notwithstanding this, he declares in the most absolute manner, when the sailors amidst their distress were about to flee, “ Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved ; ” so it is in spiritual things. — “ How can I *understand* (replies the Eunuch to Philip's question) except some man should guide me ? ” Acts viii. 31. Hence we learn the reason and propriety of many of the names and titles ascribed in the divine Word to the Ministers of JESUS CHRIST—of the solemn charges, warnings, and exhortations announced by the two great Apostles to Timothy, Titus, and the Elders among the Churches they wrote to, and in them to all others to the end of the world. Acts xx. 28. Col. iv. 17. 1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, 4. of all the obedience commanded to be given to the Ministers of CHRIST, and the various weighty, glorious and important arguments and motives that are made use of to engage them to fulfil the work of the Ministry. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. 1 Pet. v. 1—4. They all unite in

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proof of the necessity of the Gospel Ministry as a divinely appointed mean, graciously designed to answer the most important of all purposes—and “ what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.”

§ 9. A MEDITATION UPON THE DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.—Were I in the company of CHRIST at his departure from the temple of Jerusalem, like the wondering disciple, I might justly exclaim, “ What manner of stones and what buildings are here !” or as the queen of Sheba, “ when she had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house which he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup bearers, and their apparel ; and his ascent by which he went up to the house of the LORD,” I might be apt to faint under the weight of so much splendour and glory ! But could I recover myself to the use of my understanding, I would ask my heavenly guide—Pray, what is the design of all this solemn grandeur and magnificence ? Did the wonderful author build it only to be gazed at by an admiring world ? In like manner should the question be proposed, Has my LORD ordained the Gospel Ministry only for its own sake, or merely to employ the  
the

the attention and admiration of mankind? Oh! no; with a godly jealousy and heavenly benignity in his divine countenance, methinks, I hear him reply—this great and glorious work, this all important office, and whatever belongs to it, I ordain “ for the honour of my Name and the glory of my Majesty.” My intention at the same time by this mean is to accommodate my spouse, my infinitely beloved bride, with all spiritual blessings; to this end will I *commune* with my people from the *mercy-seat*, and make them *joyful in my house of prayer*. Here “ the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which are ready to perish.”—Here will I feed the hungry with *the bread of life*—here will I make unto all people “ a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined”—here will I cloathe my beloved with *the garments of salvation*, and cover my church with *the robe of righteousness*; in a word, by this blessed mean will I prepare them all for *the marriage supper of the Lamb*.

Thus, agreeable to the plan laid down, we have considered the Author, Causes, Necessity and Design of the Gospel Ministry; and should now enter into a more full description of its Nature; but this we shall endeavour, God willing, as proposed in our next Chapter.



## C H A P. II.

## THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY MORE FULLY DESCRIBED.

First, from the PRINCIPAL NAMES, whereby it is called in Scripture—as an Office, a Work, a Race, and a Warfare.—IMPROVEMENT contains the manner how the Minister of Christ may most effectually, like the Apostle, magnify his Office.—The Minister of Christ encouraged from the greatness of the Work, and the Grace promised for its performance, to break through every Difficulty in the discharge of his Duty; with reviving cordials to animate him in his heavenly Race, and encourage him in his glorious Warfare.

Secondly, from its PROPERTIES (as revealed in the sacred Oracles) these are in general GOOD;---in particular, like its adorable Author—divine, spiritual, holy, heavenly and glorious. --- Improvement by way of Meditation.

**F**IRST, the PRINCIPAL NAMES.—  
I. AN OFFICE.—By an Office here, we understand a sacred Charge or Trust committed

mitted by the great Head of the Church to such persons as are duly qualified and called, according to his Word—by virtue of which trust, they derive power and authority, and are laid under the most solemn obligations to discharge all the duties required, agreeable to the important design of its institution.

The TRUST that is committed to them is of infinite value and importance, no less than the *Word of Christ*, the *Worship and Ordinances of Christ*, and the *Church of Christ*.—These three *things* comprehend the whole of their trust.—And may we not well exclaim with the apostle here, “Who is sufficient for these things!”—The *Word of Christ*—Agreeably to this we hear the great Apostle declaring “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust;” all the Ministers of JESUS CHRIST, in every age of the world, are entrusted with the *same* Word, as Moses, Aaron, and his sons had the charge of the sanctuary. Numbers iii. 38. Zech. iii. 7. 1 Tim. i. 11.—CHRIST in effect now says to all his Ministers --- Here is my Word—remember, I “have magnified it above all my name”—take care you do not *corrupt* it—See that you keep it *pure* and *entire* throughout.---I

cannot bear to be misrepresented. 1 Tim. vi. 20. 2 Tim. ii. 2. The *Worship and Ordinances of Christ*---these are the signs, the seals, the tokens, the pledges of my love to all my redeemed; be careful that you administer them as I delivered them to you. The *Church of Christ*---here is my Church, says the great, glorious and all-compassionate Head; Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 1---4.---they are near and dear to me, as the *apple of mine eye*;---they are “graven upon the palms of my hands; *the walls of Zion* are continually before me;” Isa. xlix. 16. I have been from all eternity laying the plan of their Redemption.---I left my Father’s bosom---I lived, I died, I arose, I ascended; I am now exalted at the right hand of God to bestow every blessing upon them, ---Go tell my *brethren*, for I am not ashamed to call them by that endearing name---Go tell my *brethren* of all my glory in Heaven: “Feed my sheep---Feed my Lambs, feed them with knowledge and understanding”---teach them the whole of my revealed will---teach them “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded”---and rule and govern them entirely according to my perfect and infallible word.

We



We said in our definition of the office, that it is committed to such persons as are duly qualified and called according to his Word; but these things require a larger share in our meditations; which will be the subject of the two following Chapters, and therefore we shall not here enter upon them.

By virtue of which *trust* it was observed they derive *power* and *authority*. By *power* and *authority* we mean only that which is given by CHRIST himself in common to all his Ministers, to discharge the several duties of their office, in his name; all this is grounded in their qualifications *for*, and their call and solemn dedication *to* the sacred office. The authority which is given to the Ministers of CHRIST may be learned from the names by which they are called in Scripture, as *Bishops, Elders, Rulers, Pastors, and Ambassadors*; from the nature of their work, in which they represent CHRIST himself, and the obligations the Church are laid under to love, esteem, honour, and obey them—But they have no authority to *lord it over God's heritage*; they have no *dominion* over the persons, consciences, or faith of their hearers; 2 Cor. i. 24. Luke xxii. 24, 25, 26. Matt. xx. 25, 26. Nor have they the least right to propose any thing as a doctrine, or

enforce any thing as a duty to be believed or practised, without a divine warrant. All the authority that even the apostles had in and over the Churches was *for good to edification*; 2 Cor. x. 8. and only to be used for the spiritual and eternal welfare of their hearers.—Ministers are over the Churches *in the Lord*, and must do all in his *name*, and for his *sake*, carefully guarding against the two dreadful extremes; on the one hand, the abuse; and on the other, the neglect of the power which CHRIST has given them; always remembering the solemn obligations they are under to *watch for souls as those that must give account*, and that they are entirely bounded by his holy Word.—Notwithstanding all the controversy that has ever been in the world about church power and authority, those are the greatest Ministers of the Gospel, in CHRIST's esteem, who are the least in their own eyes, most humble, and are *become as little children*; Matt. xviii. 1 — 4. — Matt. xxiii. 8—12.—Blessed Paul seems to have drank deep into the Spirit of his divine Master; 2 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

This office is particularly pointed out in 1 Tim. iii. 1. and called *the office of a Bishop*, i. e. one who is appointed to *teach*  
and

and rule, or feed the flock of God; 1 Pet. v. 2. or to take care of the Church of CHRIST in the administration of all divine ordinances, according to the fixed rules he has left in his Word, as their head and king.

It might be observed, that the persons who execute this office are called by different names in the Word of God, as *Pastors* and *Teachers*, *Elders*, *Rulers*, *Stewards*, *Watchmen*, *Angels of the Churches*, *Ambassadors of Christ*, and *Servants of the most high God*; Tit. i. 5. 1 Tim. v. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 1. Heb. xiii. 17. Eph. iv. 11. with many other names expressive of the office, work, and things pertaining thereto, which is not our present enquiry. But should the question be asked — What can be the reason of all those distinctions of names and titles, if every one of them signify the same office? — The answer is, that the various lights in which CHRIST is pleased in Scripture to view his Church, and the several duties his Ministers are to discharge in the different branches of their office (as they stand related both to CHRIST and his Church) clearly evince the cause and reason — To instance only the following particulars. — First, the different points of light in which CHRIST beholds his Church. — Is he pleased  
to



to call them his *sheep*? John x. 27. His Ministers are their *shepherds*; Eph. iv. 11. or his *household*? his Ministers are the *Stewards*—Are they called a city? then his Ministers are stiled *Watchmen*—or if a *Kingdom*, then his Ministers under him are the *Rulers* and *Ambassadors*. ——— Secondly, the various *duties* belonging to the several parts of their office afford ample satisfaction on this head—Here we may without confusion invert the order, and ask—Is the Minister of CHRIST called a *Teacher*? he must *instruct* the people in the knowledge of all the things that belong to their spiritual and eternal peace. Is he a *Watchman*? he must “watch for souls as one that must give an account.” Is he a *Steward*? he must dispense *the mysteries of the manifold grace of God* to all his family, and give to every one *their portion in due season*. Is he a *Ruler*? he must make the laws of CHRIST his *rule*; and rule in every thing according to those laws. Is he an *Angel*? he must bring the heavenly *messages* of life and salvation. Is he an *Ambassador*? In the name and stead of the King of kings, he must use every appointed mean to *negociate a peace* between the Majesty of heaven, his divine Master, and pray and beseech sinners to be reconciled to God.

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To mention no more, we shall endeavour here to speak the whole in few words. Is he a *Pastor* or *Shepherd*? he must seek *that which was lost, strengthen the diseased, heal the sick, bring again that which was driven away, feed the flock of God, gather the lambs in his arm, carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*

### I M P R O V E M E N T.

Is the Gospel Ministry an *office*, a sacred and most important *office* which the LORD of Glory did not count beneath his infinite dignity? and wouldest thou, my soul, obtain and preserve the honour of the Gospel Ministry? be *faithful, laborious, and constant* in the *performance* of the heavenly work;—remember the obligations, the innumerable obligations thou art under, of *gratitude, love and obedience* to the chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls for counting, for making, thee faithful, and putting thee into the Ministry. Wouldest thou indeed and in truth *really* magnify thine *office*? Sink, O sink lowest in thine own eyes; walk, ever walk humbly with thy God; exalt in heart and life, most highly exalt thy blessed LORD in the esteem of all; remember, every soul thou art the happy instrument of turning to righteousness *here* will be a jewel of

of honour in thy crown *hereafter*; 1 Pet. v. 4. 1 Theff. ii. 19. A *crown*! which (as the wondering multitude, who with united Hōfannas to the Son of David *strewed their garments and olive branches in the way*, when the captain of salvation made his triumphant entry into Jerufalem, but with greater demonstrations of reverential joy) thou wilt cast down before the throne of him “that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore.”——We now proceed to a

IIInd. V I E W of the Gospel Ministry from the same passage—It is not only called the *office* of a bishop, but a *work*: “he that desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good work;” 1 Tim. iii. 1. Hence we read of *Pastors and Teachers* being given “for the work of the Ministry;” Eph. iv. 11, 12. and of *Barnabas and Paul* being separated by the *Holy Ghost* for the work, “whereunto he had called them;” Acts xiii. 2.

1. The exprefs word of God—the figurative names given to the persons concerned---and the experience of CHRIST and his apostles—all unite in the proof and confirmation of this point, that the Gospel Ministry is a most laborious and difficult undertaking.—It is from this confideration, that the Apostle earnestly exhorts



exhorts the Church of Thessalonica to the discharge of their several duties to their Pastors; 1 Theff. v. 12, 13. not only because they were *over them in the Lord*, but because they *laboured* among them; 1 Tim. v. 17. Here we might observe by the way, the reasonableness and propriety of all that love, esteem, honour, obedience, and submission commanded in the Word of God; of all those prayers that are to be offered up; and the provision required to be made for them in every age and part of the world--- But to proceed---

2. The *labour* of Ministers is further expressed in the sacred Scriptures by many of the figurative names given to them, held forth by some of the most laborious employments---as *builders, vine-dressers, husbandmen, labourers in the harvest, Oxen treading out the corn*, with many other epithets, which we shall not particularize. The *house of God* cannot be built---the *vineyard of CHRIST* kept---the business of *husbandmen* performed---the *harvest* preserved---and the *corn* of God's Word well prepared for the use of the *household and Church of CHRIST*, without much care, pains, and hard labour.

3. The *experience* of CHRIST and his apostles. ---Hence, says the indefatigable Redeemer,

“ My

“ My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” ---not only his *work* as a *priest*, but as a *prophet* and *king*—one part of which was in his own person to *preach the Gospel*, and *feed his flock*, which he was ere long as a *priest* to *purchase* with his *precious blood*---to stand and feed in the name, and *strength*, and *majesty* of the LORD; Mic. v. 4. to animate all his Ministers to follow his steps---He urges, among other things, the indispensable necessity of this part of his *work*---“ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day;” John ix. 4. He never rested until he could say, “ FATHER, I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;” John xvii. 4. Accordingly we hear of Paul’s willingness to *spend himself and to be spent*; 2 Cor. xii. 15. of Epaphraditus, who for the work of CHRIST *was sick nigh unto death*; Phil. ii. 30. and of the *angel* of the Church of Ephesus, though afterwards blamed by CHRIST himself for having *left his first love*, yet praised and approved for his *work*. “ I know thy works, and for my name’s sake hast laboured;” Rev. ii. 2, 3.

This is the heavenly and delightful principle, this is the hidden, inward, wonderful

ful spring of action---for my *name's sake*---  
 This, and this only will meet with the  
 plaudit of our Judge—Love to CHRIST,  
 and love to precious souls; this wrought in  
 the heart and kindled into a sacred flame,  
 by constant application *to*, and communica-  
 tion *from* the altar, will strengthen, revive,  
 and animate us in all our labours,---And  
*is there not a cause?*---Should we go on to  
 consider the weakness of even the best of  
 men, who are employed as instruments, to-  
 gether with the strength of the opposition  
 that lies in their way, we should find a  
 most humbling heart-affecting proof of the  
 Gospel Ministry being a most *laborious* and  
*difficult* undertaking.

The persons employed are *men* on earth,  
 not *angels* in heaven, though there is some-  
 thing more than angelick in their office;  
 yet as Elijah, Paul and Barnabas, they are  
*men of like passions* with others, and the best  
 of *men* in themselves are but *men* at the best;  
 they have more or less of the same discour-  
 agements as Christians in common with  
 the rest of mankind; but especially as *Min-  
 isters* they lay more exposed to the rage  
 and malice of their adversaries, and are in  
 greater danger, without divine assistance, to  
 fall a sacrifice.—*Ministers* have *souls*, preci-  
 ous



ous and immortal *souls* of their own to take care of; they must *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling* as well as others—and surely it can be no easy matter to do this, and *travail in birth* for the salvation of others also.—Besides, we might add, that the more spiritual and heavenly the work, the more opposite to the nature of fallen man.

To give ourselves *wholly* to the work, like Epaphras, to be always labouring fervently for the Church, and with them for the spread of the glorious Gospel throughout the world; Col. iv. 12. to *search*, and *study*, and *meditate* upon and *understand*, and *feel*, and *give the sense and mind of Christ* in every part of the word we handle---to *dispense* it always in such a method, way, and manner, as shall be most adapted to every different purpose, and likely to answer its grand design---to cast light into the deep gloomy understanding, where worse than Egyptian darkness reigns—to persuade the rebellious will to *chuse*, like Mary, *the good part which shall never be taken away*—to impress the treacherous memory with words, *like nails fastened by the master of assemblies*—to confine the roving fancy within the bounds of *reason and revelation*---to come  
at

at the *consciences* of our hearers, rightly to *dispose* of every *affection* both in our own souls and theirs—by all publick and private *means*, *duties*, and *ordinances* to “ feed the Church of CHRIST, which he has purchased with his blood---to be instant in and out of season---to instruct, rebuke, exhort, comfort:”---So to *think*, and *speak*, and *act*, as to “ be an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity ;” so to *live*, and *preach* and *administer* every ordinance, as, by a divine blessing, to “ save both ourselves and those that hear us” --- to “ present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS ;” Col. i. 28. must be acknowledged a great and important *work*.---We may well exclaim with Paul, “ Who is sufficient !” —Thus from express Scriptures some of the *names* given to Ministers—the *experience* of CHRIST and his Apostles—the *importance* of the charge---the *weakness* of the best instruments, and the *strength* of *opposition* made against it, we have made it evident, that the Gospel Ministry is a *laborious* and difficult undertaking ; whence arises the absolute need of divine help, but more of this on the Spirit of Preaching.

F

IMPROVE-

## I M P R O V E M E N T.

Is the Gospel Ministry a work of such vast *importance*, so excellent and heavenly in its nature and design, so laborious and difficult to perform?—Should not every thing else in our hearts and affections, as long as we live, give place and make way for it?—God in effect now speaks to all his Ministers, as he once did by the prophet Haggai to the Jews, Hag. ii. 4. “Yet now be strong,” O ye builders of the Church—“be strong,” O ye ministers of the sanctuary—“be strong,” O ye servants of the most high God, “saith the LORD; and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.”—“Lo! I am with you always (says the gracious Redeemer) even unto the end of the world.”

When the enemies of the Jewish temple conspired to hinder and draw them off from building the walls of Jerusalem, so intent was Nehemiah upon the business, that he returned four times this heroic answer, “I am doing a great work and cannot come down;” but it is a greater work to build the church of God:—Surely every true Minister of JESUS CHRIST may with as much propriety adopt the same answer—when the enemies of our salvation, like those of the Jews, conspire together to hinder and ruin the building and builders:—

“I am



“ I am doing a great work and cannot come down.”—Satan, “ I am doing a great work and cannot come down.”—World, “ I am doing a great work and cannot come down.”—Corrupt heart, sloth, love of ease, pride, unbelief, “ I am doing a great work and cannot come down ;” I *may* not, I *must* not, I *ought* not, I *dare* not, and by the grace of God, I *will* not “ come down” to your terms.—We now come to a

III. d. VIEW of the Gospel Ministry, as proposed, under the figure of a Course or Race.—The work of every Minister, as well as the life of every Christian, in Scripture, is stiled a *course* or *race*—hence we read of John’s fulfilling his *course*; Acts xiii. 25. and of Paul (in one of the most affecting speeches that ever was uttered) not *counting even his life dear to himself*, so that he *might finish his course with joy*; Acts xx. 24. consistent with the glorious declaration he makes in his Epistle to Timothy; 2 Timothy iv. 7, 8. compared with Galatians ii. 2. and Philippians ii. 16. great part of which evidently respects not only his life, but labours, as a Gospel Minister. This manner of speaking seems to be in allusion to the Grecian Exercises, and Olympic Games, a great part of which

consisted in their races. 1 Cor. ix. 24---26. Phil. iii. 14---16. Heb. xii. 1. We shall endeavour, while we put the life of a Christian and the labours of a Gospel Minister together, to do it in such a manner as not to confound the subject. The rules and laws to which those persons were obliged to conform, through the whole of their *course*—the preparation they were engaged to *make*—the manner in which they were to *run*—the *mark* to which they *reached*, and the prize held forth and obtained by every conqueror—all afford a lively, striking, and beautiful description both of the life and labours of every Christian and Minister of CHRIST.

We shall speak a word upon each of these particulars.—There were certain fixed laws and rules to which they were obliged to conform in all that related to their race, as the apostle affirms, “ If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully ;” 2 Tim. ii. 5. so it is in the Christian life, there are certain laws and rules fixed in the Word of God for every thing belonging to faith and obedience. Phil. iii. 16. Laws more certain than those of Greece, or the laws of the Medes and Persians ; Laws fixed and immutable as the

the throne, the counsels, the perfections, the very being of JEHOVAH himself --- for dignity, such as becomes infinite Majesty to form and support---for simplicity, such as *he may read that runneth*. So it is respecting the Gospel Ministry, one design of the Holy Scripture is to make the Minister of CHRIST, the "Man of GOD perfect---thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 17. Every thing here must be done according to the laws and rules fixed and established in the same word.---The Minister of CHRIST wants no more than to understand, experience and conform in all things to this rule, and as far as he is possessed of a Paul-like, humble, holy, and heavenly ambition, he will not be content and satisfied with less.---Here we might shew in what these rules consisted.

1st. We are informed they were to be very careful in their preparations for their *race* --- Such as to be "temperate in all things," --- To deny themselves whatever might hinder them in their *course*---and to use such and only such diet, exercise, and regimen, as would best fit and prepare them for it. So must the Christian--- "If any man (says the great Head of the Church) will be my disciple, let him deny himself." We must



“ lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us ;” Heb. xii. 1. The means and helps we are to make use of to facilitate the Christian race are all clearly revealed, and indeed a due attendance upon them, a spiritual use of them, is “ running the race.”—So must the Minister of the Gospel *deny himself* of all that tends to the hindrance, and use such and only such means as are best adapted to its furtherance, in order to be prepared, and “ thoroughly furnished unto all good works ;” 2 Tim. ii. 21, iii. 17. We have a full account of them in Timothy and Titus ; the things there revealed can never be too well learned and understood ; they are not only necessary at first entrance on our *course*, but what we must be learning and practising more and more as long as we live ; for this reason we would not thrust them up in a corner, but take a distinct survey of them at large in our next Chapter.

2dly. The MANNER in which they were to *run*.---Here they were to exert all their power ; Eccles. ix. 10. So must every Christian ; all his faculties must be exercised to the uttermost ; it is not sufficient merely to do whatsoever our hands find to do, but we must *do it with our might*.  
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We ought not to be *slotful* in any, but especially the heavenly business of religion—but “fervent in spirit, serving the LORD.” We must *love* him with all our understanding—true *love* to God is judicious *love*—We must *know*, if we would *love* him aright: We must *serve* him with a willing mind. Our hearts must be engaged in the heavenly *race*; and “by patient continuance in well doing,” in the vigorous exercise of every gift and grace, and the careful, faithful, diligent performance of every duty, “look for glory, and honour, and immortality,”—not for the sake of, but in the way of our duty—So must every Minister of JESUS *serve* God, like Paul, with his “spirit in the Gospel of his Son;” Rom. i. 9. All his Natural, Acquired, Gracious, Moral, and Spiritual Talents, Abilities, Endowments, Accomplishments, and Qualifications of every kind, like the eyes and ears, and hands and feet of the Grecian Racer, must be ardently, emulously engaged in the all-important business; he must be an *example* in *faith*, *patience*, and all other *duties* and *graces*. 1 Tim. iv. 12. This is expressed by the apostle in the language of “reaching forth, stretching forward and pref-

pressing towards." — Philippians iii. 14, Psalm xix. 5.

3dly. The MARK, or GOAL, to which they were to reach.—“ I press toward the mark,” says Paul; and so must all who would *follow* him, as he *followed* CHRIST.—The speech of the apostle on this subject is exceedingly remarkable, humble, animating, instructive, and affectionate, addressed to all the members and all the Ministers of JESUS CHRIST—“ I follow after (Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. Heb. xii. 1.) if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of CHRIST JESUS.”—He graciously fought, found, and laid hold of me in my mad career to Damascus, when I was in the horrible path that leads to death and hell---with the voice of omnipotence, he entered my heart, subdued my will, and conquered my whole soul.---I am his lawful captive---I rejoice in my captivity---my captivity is now my liberty, my freedom; I am a subject of his kingdom, a servant in his family, a Christian, a Minister, an Apostle---I have done much, very much against him---I have outrun my companions in the road to destruction---He hath turned me in the way to Zion, to Jerusalem: My face, my eyes, my hands, my feet, are all directed thitherward.



ward. I am now fixed, resolved and determined to outrun all my heavenly companions. My resolution is deliberation. My affection is reason. I am not only bent for heaven myself, but my prayers, sermons, writings, doings, sufferings, life, death; ALL unite and terminate in this one point---the salvation of my own soul and those that hear me,

Brethren, I *count* not myself to have *apprehended*---but *one thing* I can say, though I have not yet *attained* that degree of excellence for which CHRIST *apprehended* me, I am found in the practice of these most important duties, “forgetting those things which are behind.” Holy, humbling, heavenly art!---He did not stop to look back; he was afraid of losing ground, or giving way to a pharisaic spirit of pride, or carnal security. He could not bear the thoughts of stopping short of perfection in knowledge, faith, love, and obedience, with regard to his blessed Master, nor take off his eyes from the mark he pursued---“looking unto JESUS;” not a glance now and then, but a constant, living, realizing, believing view, or beholding the glory of the LORD, until we are “changed into the same image.”---CHRIST is the *mark*, the *scope*, the great end

end of the Christian, and the Ministerial *Race*. And to whom else should the Christian look? "There is none other name."—"LORD, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!"—On this wonderful object, all the Church in heaven and earth, those who are *now* running for, and those who have *already* obtained the prize, with an "innumerable company of angels," the holy and eternal SPIRIT, and "God the Judge of all," have their eyes and hearts fixed; here all the prophets, apostles, and Ministers of the Gospel, in every age, centre—"For me to live is CHRIST," says Paul.

The word, character, life and example of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls is the only perfect standard for all his Ministers in every part of their duty.—This brings us to consider,

LASTLY, The prize held forth and enjoyed by every conqueror.—This, though of but little worth and consequence, yet it wrought them into a conformity to all the rules and laws that were established in those exercises, and determined them in their preparations, in the abstinence *from* and use *of* all such things as on the one hand might hinder, and on the other further the end and design they had in view, and animated them in their pursuit

suit of the Mark, in order to *obtain* the Prize.—And what was the prize?—"They do it," says Paul, "to obtain a corruptible crown"—(a crown of Bays, or Myrtle, or Laurel, or a crown of Gold) What is the Prize? Oh! what a glorious contrast is here! What an astonishing difference on the side of the real Christian and true Minister of JESUS CHRIST!—"But we," says the Apostle, "an incorruptible crown."---Brethren, let us weigh them in the balance; throw corruption, earth, and time, into one scale, and incorruption, heaven, and eternity, into the other; throw all the *Kingdoms* of the world, and the *glories* of them into the *former*, and put CHRIST and Heaven into the *latter*—O Sirs! the scale still mounts; the one is lighter than nothing, and vanity; the other weighty, solid, substantial, permanent, and everlasting.---"In *his* presence is fulness of joy, and at *his* right hand are pleasures for evermore." Psalm xvi. 11. No more then of your crowns of Bays, or Myrtle, or Laurel, or Gold---give me an "incorruptible crown—a crown of life—a crown of righteousness—a crown of glory!" The care, labour, and diligence, they used in these Games, were often more than adequate to the prize---but what is all the care, and



and pains, and sufferings of the Christian!---what is all the study, meditation, prayer, and work of the most laborious, holy, and heavenly Minister!---what is all that we can do, or men or angels conceive, to the invaluable prize held forth to us!---Prize!---it is a Reward!---True—and this should certainly excite us to the utmost alacrity---But let it never be forgotten, it is “a Reward of Grace, not of Debt”---This should sink us into the deepest *humility*---It is an important reality, that we can never obtain it, without *running*—yet it is not bestowed upon us *for the sake* of our running, but *of* our Forerunner—what he hath done—what he hath suffered—what he is *now* doing at his Father’s right hand—Yes; “eternal life is the gift of GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.”

In these exercises but *one* could obtain the prize; but here *every* true Christian, *every* faithful Minister of JESUS CHRIST—*all* who “love his appearing;” shall obtain it: See 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. — 1 Tim. iv. 16. These are the “exceeding great and precious promises” given to both, and the wondrous, gracious, glorious prize held forth to *every* conqueror.

IMPROVE

## I M P R O V E M E N T.

Is the Gospel Ministry a *Course* or *Race*?---  
 See to it, my soul, that thou striveſt lawfully, wait patiently, diligently, affectionately; “wait upon the LORD” at all times, places, and circumstances, in which he has promiſed to meet with thee. Iſa. xl. 31. Remember, “the preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue is from *him*. Acknowledge the LORD in all thy ways, and he ſhall direct thy paths;” keep, ever keep thine eye upon the Mark, the Author and Finiſher of faith and ſalvation. Behold the Prize, the heavenly Prize held forth. The “everlaſting doors” ſtanding open—the “joy unſpeakable” inviting thee.—A royal Diadem; a Crown, a never fading Crown, a Crown of Righteouſneſs, a Crown of Glory—This will fire, ſtrengthen, animate thee.—CHRIST and Heaven are all *perſuaſive*; CHRIST and Heaven are all conſtraining, prevailing arguments and motives to the moſt lively and vigorous exertion of faith, patience, temperance and ſelf denial; every grace and every affection—to the moſt circumspect and diligent performance of every duty, and the moſt conſcientious  
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use and improvement of all the means of grace and ordinances of the Gospel.—

This will make thee *swifter* than an Eagle, and *stronger* than a Lion, to *bold* up, *bold* out, and *finish* thy heavenly Course with joy, and the Ministry thou hast received of the LORD JESUS. This brings us to the

IVth. and LAST point of light in which we proposed to view the nature of the Gospel Ministry, according to the principal names, by which it is called, a *Warfare*; accordingly the great Apostle solemnly charges his son Timothy “to war a good warfare;” 1 Tim. i. 18. in which name we may learn both the true nature of the Christian life and the Gospel Ministry.—It is a warfare.

Every real Christian and Minister of JESUS CHRIST here in this world is in a militant state; both the life of the *former* and the service of the *latter*, in Scripture phrase, is stiled a *warfare*.—As a Christian in common, with all other true and loyal subjects of his divine LORD, he has known and felt the force of his all *conquering* love, been made “willing in the day of *his* power,” thrown away the *arms* of his hostility; freely surrendered himself, like the Apostle, to the disposal of the “Captain of salvation;” and entered a volunteer in his  
delightful



lightful service, to *fight* under his banner against all his spiritual enemies.—Accordingly, as a Christian in general, “he puts on “the whole armour of God;” Eph. vi. 11—18. But more especially, as a Minister, his business is to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;” Jude verse 3. *Defend* and *guard* the doctrines of the Gospel of the Grace of God from the dreadful abuse, which the devil, the world, or sin, might lead to, and preserve them *pure* and *entire* both in principle and practice. As to the worship of God, his great concern is to see that every part be performed “in Spirit and in truth:” John iv. 24. As to the Church of God, all his conduct and behaviour should tend to the ruin of Satan’s kingdom, and the establishment of his divine LORD: Here all the means he uses, all the duties he discharges, all the ordinances he administers; every prayer, every sermon, every sacrament, should centre and terminate.—Hence arises the necessity of being “strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS;” 2 Tim. ii. 1. of *enduring hardness*; 2 Tim. ii. 3. of being *disentangled* from the world, and *devoted* to the service of his Captain, LORD, and King; for this grand purpose, hat he may *please* him who has  
*chosen*

*chosen* him to be a *Soldier*: These are not only essential to his entrance upon the spiritual and ministerial Warfare, but of infinite importance all the time he is in the field, and well deserve a more full and particular consideration: I mean *strength* in the *grace* that is in CHRIST JESUS; 2 Tim. ii. 1. the *suffering affliction*; 2 Tim. ii. 3.—*Disentanglement* from the world, and *Devotedness* to the service of his Captain, LORD, and King.

1st. He must “be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS.”—Those are in the greatest danger who enter the field in their own strength; they can never please their Captain, defend his cause, conquer one of their enemies, or stand their ground a moment.—No; says an infallible Judge, “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength;” Isa. xl. 30, 31. If we mean to stand, we must go, like David, “in the strength of the LORD GOD;” Psalm lxxi. 16. And “is there not a cause?” O Sirs, the power, the number of our enemies, the importance, the infinite importance of our Warfare, and our own entire weakness, all loudly call upon us, in the language of the  
Apostle,

Apostle, " Be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS." We may all justly say, as king Jehoshaphat, in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in his distress, O our God, " we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do;—*happy if our eyes, like theirs, are upon him*;" 2 Chron. xx. 12. " Who is sufficient?" not one of all the children of men, independant of CHRIST; not the least good thought, word, or action, can be conceived, spoken, or performed without him; but his grace is sufficient for every one of his soldiers to enable them to *do all things*; in him there is a *fulness*, a *fountain-fulness*; an unmeasurable, an infinite *fulness*, for this very purpose, that out of it all his members and all his Ministers might *receive grace for grace*.

It is our duty, our privilege, our constant business to be *receiving* and *living* in an entire dependance, not upon any or all the endowments we may *possess*, nor even upon the grace *already received*, though gratitude obliges us like Paul to set up our Ebenezer; " having obtained help of GOD, *we continue to this day*;" but upon the *grace* that is *treasured up* in CHRIST;—this is the way,  
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the only way, to get and keep strength, and this is absolutely necessary.

2dly. To enable the Soldier and Minister of CHRIST to *endure hardness*, to *suffer* the afflictions of the Gospel; the cross lays in the way to the crown, it is unavoidable: It is impossible to be a good foldier of JESUS CHRIST, without conformity to him here. All the members, but especially Ministers of CHRIST, must expect and count, more or less, upon tribulations, temptations, and persecutions; and passive fortitude is as necessary to *suffer*, as active is to *do* the will of GOD; the former has a great influence upon the latter. The faith and the patience of JESUS CHRIST, an eye upon CHRIST, and a heart *with* CHRIST, inspire the soul with a noble, undaunted courage, a divine and heavenly magnanimity;---this will enable us, in the realizing prospect of all the sufferings of the present life, to say experimentally, like Paul, "none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself—I am not only willing to be bound, but to die," for the sake of the LORD JESUS, and the good of his Church.

3dly. Another important duty and qualification I would mention here is Disentanglement from the world; 2Tim, ii. 4. "No man  
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that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this Life"—in allusion to the military laws of Rome, which forbad the Soldiers engaging in secular and civil business, lest it should hinder them in the service. The reason follows, that he may *please* him that hath *chosen* him to be a *Soldier*, and accordingly devote himself, his time, his talents, and all his care and concerns to the *Warfare*: So the Soldier of J E S U S C H R I S T, who is peculiarly engaged in a *Warfare* infinitely more important, should be exceedingly careful, not only, while he is in the World, not to be *of* the World, and to "set *his* affections upon things above;" but to devote himself *wholly* to the service of C H R I S T and his Church. 1 Tim. iv. 15.

—That he may *please* him—this is the one great Concern to avoid whatever is displeasing, and to persevere in the practice of all that he requires; to this great end, the Minister of C H R I S T is supplied with all necessary furniture—every Gift, every Grace, that is bestowed upon him; all his natural, acquired, gracious, moral, and spiritual qualifications;—whatever knowledge, or wisdom, or learning, or eloquence, he is possessed of, are to be *devoted* to the service of his L O R D; but above all, the holy Scrip-  
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tures.

tures. “ The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the Obedience of CHRIST.” Numb. viii. 25. 1 Tim. i. 18.—2 Tim. ii. 1, 3, 4.—2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

### I M P R O V E M E N T.

And is the Gospel Ministry a Warfare? What abundant need of skill, strength, and courage, to encounter with all the dangers, and difficulties in our way; not to be afraid to “ speak with the enemy in the gate?” How careful should we be to get ourselves as much as possible *disentangled* from worldly affairs? to be well furnished and prepared, instructed and supported by him, who has counsel and strength for war, that we may be *valiant* for the truth upon the earth, and help as far as possible towards the ruin of Satan’s empire, and the establishment of the kingdom of CHRIST in the world. . How should the wisdom, power, grace, and love of the LORD of Hosts, who is strong and mighty in battle, revive and encourage us!

How



How should we prize our weapons ! How weak, how defenceless, are we without them ; what wonderful conquests have been gained by them for near six thousand years ! *Three thousand souls* in one day ! Oh ! what a glorious time, place, sermon, addition to *the general assembly and Church of the first born* was here, and what an *innumerable company*, that have *overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony*, are now surrounding the throne ! Is it possible for us to understand the use of those heavenly weapons too well, or to be too expert in this Warfare ? Should not *the word of Christ* ever dwell in us richly in all wisdom, be ever on our hearts and tongues ?—But above all, how should we prize the Captain of our salvation, who hath already spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross !

Oh ! let us always remember that *our* spiritual enemies are *his*, and treat them as such : —Let us hence take encouragement to hope, that he will sooner or later *arise, plead his own cause, and vindicate his own honour and glory*. Thus let us go on in the strength and walk up and down in the name of CHRIST. This is the way to come off at last more than conquerors, to be able with heavenly ap-

plication to ourselves to make the triumphant language of the heroic Apostle our own, " I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but also to all them that love his appearing."

Having considered the Gospel Ministry from the Names by which it is called in Scripture, we now proceed to enter more fully into its true and peculiar Nature, from a view,

SECONDLY, of the QUALITIES or PROPERTIES, as revealed in the sacred Oracles; these are like its adorable Author, in general GOOD; in particular, *divine, spiritual, holy, heavenly, and glorious.*

In *general* the Apostle emphatically styles it a GOOD WORK, 1 Tim. iii. 1. and a GOOD WARFARE; 1 Tim. i. 18.—Should we descend into the various duties belonging to it (which is not the intention of these discourses) we might easily find the most clear and satisfactory evidences in support of  
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of this great and important truth, that every part of the Work is good ; we should hear the man after God's own heart, from happy experience, testifying, It is good to draw nigh to God in prayer ; Psal. lxxiii. 28. It is good to sing praises to the name of the most high. Psal. xcii. 1. Psal. li. 18. *The divine law*, says the great Apostle, is not only holy and just, but good. Rom. vii. 12. *The Gospel is good news from a far country*, " glad tidings of good things ;" Rom. x. xv. " good tidings of great joy ;" Luke ii. 10. as the multitude of the heavenly host sang, at the birth of its adorable Author, " good will towards men ;" Luke ii. 14. and *all the ordinances*, says the great Apostle, are intended *for good to edification*.

It is very easy to discern here, that when the Apostle styles the office of a bishop *a good Work* more is implied and contained in the word than is particularly expressed. In order to do justice to this *epithet*, it is not sufficient merely to regard it as positively *good*, as it is directly opposite to evil, but to consider it in connexion with the great and wonderful things it is conversant with, and the glorious design of its institution, the highest honour of God, and happiness of man ; the spiritual and eternal *good* of pre-



cious and immortal souls. Thus it will appear, as it really is, the best and most excellent employment which men or angels can ever be engaged in. We readily grant, that as to its distinguishing characteristick, it is not of a temporal, civil, or secular nature; yet nothing has so great a tendency to preserve the temporal as well as the spiritual and eternal *good* of mankind as the Gospel Ministry. — The ordinances of CHRIST, the “ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace.” The one grand design of the Gospel Ministry is to bring about a *reconciliation* between the infinite offended Majesty of heaven and offending man on earth. — *Reconciliation* between a man and his own conscience. — *Reconciliation* between one man and another: Yes; it teaches, exhorts *to* and discovers the most solid reasons, motives and arguments *for*, and is the blessed mean of enabling its partakers to *study* the things that make for peace, and as far as possible “to live peaceably with all men;” hence it is called *the Ministry of reconciliation*. — Not only the purest morality, but true and real Christianity (which is the principal aim of the Gospel Ministry, wherever it is) always makes it's partaker not only *good* but

but better in every state and condition than others, “ the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.”

Though CHRIST’S kingdom is “ not of this world—yet godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and the life that is to come.” We value, and ought to value, the preservation of our health, our lives, our liberties, and properties, but what are any or all these!—What is the health or life of the mortal body compared with the life and health of the immortal soul!—We justly account freedom from dark and gloomy prisons, deep and dismal dungeons, strong and heavy chains, and bars of iron, a great mercy, especially if we are possessed of the means of enjoying such liberty! but what is this to our being made *free*, by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, from sin and death, delivered out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, brought out of the pit by the blood of the covenant into the glorious liberty of the children of God!—What is an estate, a kingdom, a world, to those *durable riches* and righteousness that *wax not old*; that “ house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?” What are any, what are all the great, weighty and momentous affairs that have been transacted since

since the foundation of the world, or will be till time itself shall be no longer, when compared with the *salvation*, though but of one precious and immortal soul ! In this great, this all important business, the Gospel Ministry is peculiarly concerned—Here the infinite JEHOVAH, as a covenant GOD and FATHER in JESUS CHRIST, causes all his goodness to pass before his people. Here the adorable Redeemer shews the riches, the unsearchable *riches of his glorious kingdom*, and the *honour of his excellent Majesty*. By this wonderful mean, the Holy and Eternal Spirit graciously brings redeemed souls into the participation and enjoyment of the supreme Good, into fellowship and communion with him, whose “loving-kindness is better than life ;”—“in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.” We own with sorrow of heart, that it is possible for the most humble Ministers of the Gospel to think and speak of themselves, and what they do in this work, more highly than they ought ; but it is not the instruments employed in the work, but the work itself, that we are now considering ; and such is the nature, such the transcendent excellency of those things, wherewith it is conversant, that  
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even angels themselves *desire to look into them*; such is the wonderful grandeur of its design, that considering it in this view (and this is the only view in which we now consider it) we can never form too high an idea of it, we never can raise our conceptions high enough for the subject; we do not mean to multiply epithets, but we are constrained, agreeable to the sacred Scriptures, to observe, that the Gospel Ministry, like its adorable Author, is *divine, spiritual, holy, heavenly, and glorious*.

DIVINE! all the ordinances of CHRIST and his Gospel are ordinances of divine service, worship, and adoration. The subject of it more immediately respects GOD, and the things that belong to him—The divine Being, the divine Persons, the divine Perfections, and all that he has revealed, in order to our knowing, glorifying, and enjoying him in time and eternity. In a word, the great “mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory;” 1 Tim. iii. 16. It is by the Ministry of the Gospel, that such fallen creatures, whose natures, like the wisdom from beneath, “are earthly, sensual, and devilish;”

vilish ;" James iii. 15. are by grace made the happy *partakers* (to use the language of an apostle) *of a divine nature* ; not of the essence of GOD, that is impossible, this can never be communicated, but of his image and likeness, as Moses and Paul explain it. A resemblance to him in " knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness ;" or, according to the sense of the apostle, a *conformity* to the *image* of CHRIST.

It is a SPIRITUAL Work ; not only as it is directly opposite to *carnal* things, such as the " lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," but as it is chiefly concerned in *spiritual* things, which are *spiritually* discerned ; as it is conversant with GOD, the infinite Spirit, who must be worshipped in *spirit* as well as in *truth*, with the most noble and excellent part of man, his immortal *spirit*. The Bible is a *spiritual* book. The *divine Law* is *spiritual*, not only extending outwardly to all our *Words*, and *Actions*, but to the inmost *thoughts*, *intentions* and *affections* of our heart, and all the powers and faculties of our souls. The Gospel of the grace of GOD is *spiritual*, and holds forth spiritual things—CHRIST crucified, CHRIST the bread of life, CHRIST  
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*the water of life, CHRIST the spiritual Rock,* on which *he builds his Church in every age.* Pardon of sin, the garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness, reconciliation with God, acceptance in the beloved, adoption into his family, the renewal and sanctification of our whole man, redemption and eternal salvation;—in a few words, “All spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in CHRIST JESUS.”

The sacrifices, prayers, praises, psalms, hymns, and songs appointed to be used by its divine Author are all spiritual; every ordinance of CHRIST significant and expressive of spiritual things, all of a spiritual nature, and a gracious mean, the LORD working with them, of recovering such as are by nature carnally minded, *and* dead in sin, to spiritual life; hence the Gospel Ministry is stiled “the ministration of the Spirit,” and requires that spiritual men, who are possessed not only of divine grace in common with other Christians, but of spiritual gifts of knowledge, wisdom, and utterance, suited to the edification of the Church, should engage therein. Rom. xv. 27. 1 Cor. i. 5. — xii. 4 — 10. Eph. vi. 19.

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It is HOLY. Holiness to the LORD is engraven upon every part of it.—It is a sacred office consecrated, as the things and persons used of old in divine worship in the tabernacle and temple, to the service of its adorable Author, who is glorious in holiness—of that wonderful Person, who was “ holy, harmless, undefiled, *and* separate from sinners”---of him who so *loved* the Church as to give himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church not having “ spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

Such is the nature of the Law, the Gospel, the Scripture, and every branch of the Gospel Ministry.

By the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven into the hearts of men, it becomes effectual to the ruin of every sin in heart and life, and of beginning, carrying on, and bringing to perfection the good work of grace and sanctification, and making the true believer meet for the inheritance of the saints in light ; for it is a

HEAVENLY Work.—Not only the original, as we have fully proved, but the nature and tendency of the whole and every ordinance are all heavenly.—“ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath

prepared for them that love him." The *image* of its wonderful author and subject, the second Adam, is a *heavenly image*.—The calling of all true believers, which is effected by means of the Gospel Ministry, is a *heavenly calling*. A greater than Solomon in effect now says, in the invitation of the Gospel, to all his Churches and Ministers, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon ; from the top of Amana, of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions Dens, *and* from the mountains of the Leopards." Arise, and depart, for this is not your rest ; for it is polluted, "set your affections on things above:"—In a word, if one that was himself caught up into paradise into the third heaven knew any thing about the Gospel Ministry, we are assured that

It is a most GLORIOUS Work ; like its heavenly Author, it *excels in glory*. 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9, 10. For if "the ministration of condemnation (i. e. of the law) be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness" (i. e. of the Gospel) exceed in glory. Haggai ii. 9. An inspired Apostle declares — "There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars;" but all the glory of sun, moon and stars, had better be extinguished than  
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the glory of the Gospel:—In the former, the glory of divine wisdom, power, and goodness shines upon his creatures, as the God of nature; in the latter, the glory of all the divine perfections in general are displayed; but his wisdom, love, and power in particular, as the God of all grace, to fallen creatures. The Gospel Ministry is the glory of all lands wherever it comes, the glory of the whole earth:—Yea; there is a heavenly glory in it; it is here the glory of the LORD: Isa. lx. 1. The glory of his wonderful names, persons, offices, characters, relations, word, and works;—but above all the work of redemption is revealed.—By this heavenly medium, the Gospel Ministry, all believers behold as “in a glass the glory of the LORD, *and* are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the LORD;” 2 Cor. iii. 18.—In a word, this is the arm by which he raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggars from the dunghil, to set them among princes, *even the princes of his people*, and make them inherit the throne of glory.



## IMPROVEMENT AND MEDITATION.

And is the Gospel Ministry a divine, spiritual, heavenly and glorious Work? How mean and contemptible should every thing that would stand in competition with it appear in our view! What are all the kingdoms of this time-world, and the glories of them, presented to the greatest advantage, when compared with the kingdom and glories of the eternal World! How low art thou *fallen*, O my soul, how low art thou *fallen*, ever to prize the things that are seen, so as to neglect even for one moment the *things* that are *not seen*!—Oh! for a faith, a heaven realizing faith, that breaks through all the mists, clouds, and darkness, which temporal objects draw over the glories of the eternal World! What, is there nothing in the infinite Majesty of God? Has the King in his beauty no charms to attract and call off thine affections from the things here below to those things that are above? Has the Spirit of all Grace no stronger hold upon thy heart? Is there not enough in IMMANUEL's land to feed

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and feast thee? why then shouldst thou so cleave unto the dust?

Further to enlarge upon this head, we might here enter into a particular account of all the parts which compose the Gospel Ministry, but this would carry us beyond our present bounds.

Having considered the Author, Causes, Nature, Necessity, and Design of the Gospel Ministry, we are now led, agreeable to the Plan proposed, to the essential and various preparatory Qualifications of a Minister of JESUS CHRIST.—But this we intend (if the LORD permit) to discuss in our next Chapter.

## C H A P. III.

OF THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST; THESE ARE,

First, *such as are COMMON to all his CHURCH and consist in real Christianity;—Or, in other words, the powerful Impression of the Word of Christ upon the Heart, and the powerful Expression of the Word of Christ in the Life.*—The subject more fully confirmed and illustrated, from a view of the Apostle Paul's advice to Timothy and Titus, considered both in a personal and relative light, as it respects himself, his Family, the Church, and the World.

Secondly, *Such as are PECULIAR to his work and office;—these are in general a participation of all those gifts that Christ himself possessed, as the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls; but in particular—Knowledge, Wisdom, and Utterance.*

EVERY part of our Subject, like the waters of the sanctuary in Ezekiel's Vision, rises upon us in its importance: the more attentively we view it, the more



abundant cause we shall find heartily to adopt the humble and devout exclamation of one of the most able Ministers of the New Testament: "Who is sufficient for these things!"

Were we to enlarge upon the various Qualifications of a Minister of CHRIST, we might divide them, 1st. Into those which are indispensably necessary as declared in the Scripture. 2dly. Those which are *useful* and *desirable*. By *useful* and *desirable* Qualifications, we intend both *natural* and *acquired* talents.

By *natural*—we mean all those gifts and endowments which the Creator is pleased to bestow upon his creatures, whereby, in a greater or less degree, they resemble him as the God of Nature; such as an enlarged understanding, a strong and retentive memory; a lively, fruitful, and sublime fancy; a tenderness, sympathy, and deep sensibility of soul; a fire and fervour of spirit, presence of mind, magnanimity of heart, and fluency of speech; all which are very useful in themselves, and desirable in a Minister.

By *acquired*—we *understand* both the knowledge of Languages and Sciences in general, and of the languages of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, with the various arts and sciences there referred to  
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in particular ; all which, where the Ministers of CHRIST have abilities in nature, and opportunities in providence to attain them, may be of great use in the Churches of CHRIST, and, under a Divine Blessing, promote the glorious designs of the Gospel Ministry.

But as we do not understand, that the HOLY GHOST hath spoken particularly of the measure either of *natural* or *acquired* abilities of a Minister of JESUS CHRIST, our present business and concern is with those Qualifications which are fixed and established in the Word of GOD.

One great object we shall keep in our eye in this place is carefully to avoid these two extremes—On the one hand, not to fall short of any thing which the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls requires in his Word to constitute able Ministers of the New Testament ; and on the other, not to regard any thing as essential, which CHRIST himself has not made essential to the Work ; while at the same time we are willing to obtain and maintain all the friendship with natural talents, and their highest improvement, which the most wise and learned men can wish or desire, as far as sound reason and divine revelation will countenance and keep us company.

After the most diligent enquiry into the sacred Scriptures upon this important question, we are satisfied, that there are various things common to every believer, and expressly declared as indispensably necessary in his character; and others more especially insisted upon and required of him as a Minister.

What these Qualifications are, the HOLY GHOST hath given us a large and particular account of, by the great Apostle, in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus: 1 Tim. iii. 2—7. iv. 12. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 2—7. Titus i. 6, 7, 8. ii. 7.

Here we have, I may say, the *good, acceptable, and perfect Will of GOD*, as far as it concerns the subject of our present enquiry; the Character, Conversation, and Qualifications of a Minister of JESUS CHRIST. The whole of these Qualifications is briefly comprehended in this one passage; 2 Tim. ii. 2. “Faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (1) *Faithful men*: Those and only those are fit to be trusted, and likely to pay a conscientious regard to the great and important *charge* committed to them. This supposes real Christianity in heart and life. (2) *Able to teach others also*: Those who are possessed of such spiritual gifts



gifts as are required, in order to a due discharge of their office, as Ministers of JESUS CHRIST. These spiritual gifts and abilities must certainly comprehend, at least in the

FIRST place, so much knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in general, and of the principal things contained therein in particular, as are absolutely and indispensably necessary to be taught and known, in order to Salvation.

SECONDLY, A talent of communicating this knowledge for the edification and salvation of mankind.

Both real Christianity and ability to teach others are absolutely necessary to *form* the Minister of JESUS CHRIST.—The first for the salvation of his own soul.—The second to promote the salvation of the souls of others. On the one hand, if a man is not possessed of the former, whatever other abilities he hath, he is likely to do more hurt than good—On the other, however faithful he may be, without the knowledge we have been speaking of, and a talent of communicating it, he cannot be fit to *teach* others. A man may be *faithful* to CHRIST, *faithful* to his own soul, and *faithful* to the souls of others; and greatly *useful* in his day and generation, as a private Christian, and yet not fit for a publick Preacher. But

But we by no means presume to draw the line, or mark the exact bounds of those spiritual gifts which are essential for every Preacher.—The safest, wisest, and best instruction on this head seems to arise out of the various circumstances of mankind in every part of the world ; some have ten, some five, and some but one talent : We only insist upon the necessity of their existence, more or less, in every Minister.—Some are better *instructed* in the things of the kingdom of Heaven, as well as more *communicative* ; but as those who are not *scribes well instructed* in the things of God, however *apt* they may be *to teach*, are not countenanced in Scripture ; so neither where the power of communication is wanting.—*Not a novice*, one newly brought to the Christian Religion, or but meanly instructed in it ; who understands no more than the surface :—*Not a novice* ; because you do not know that he is *grounded* and *rooted* in CHRIST, so as to abide the storms which may come from the enemies of his salvation, the Devil, the world, and his own heart. The reason is—“ lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.”

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Having compared the qualifications, mentioned in 1 Tim. iii. 2—7. with Titus i. 6, 7, 8. we find some of the same required in each place, and some in one that are not in the other; for instance—both in Timothy and Titus, “It is required that a Bishop or Elder be blameless; the husband of one wife, sober, hospitable; not given to wine, no striker; not covetous:” Some in each that are not in the other; as in Timothy, but not in Titus.—The Apostle requires that a Bishop be “vigilant, of good behaviour, apt to teach; patient, not a brawler; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;—for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?—Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil:—Moreover, he must have a good report.”—In Titus, but not in Timothy, we have a principal reason given why a Bishop must be *blameless—as the steward of God*: See an alteration in the sixth verse respecting the children; 1 Tim. iii. 4.—“Not self-willed, not soon angry; a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;” although what is not expressed is implied, and may be found in other Scriptures upon the subject; besides the



the different circumstances of the people in each place may in some measure account for the different qualifications he insists upon.— Now as the Apostle does not mention them in the same order, we shall put them both together, including what is contained in other parts of the divine Word, and proceed to a description of his PERSONAL Qualifications, both in GENERAL and PARTICULAR, and then to his RELATIVE Character, as it respects his Family, the Church, and the World.

Accordingly our present intention in the following Discourse, through divine assistance, is to consider,

FIRST, Those Qualifications of a Minister of CHRIST which are COMMON to all his members.

SECONDLY, Those spiritual Gifts which are necessary to the due discharge of his Ministerial Office.

FIRST, Such as are COMMON to every Member of JESUS CHRIST. Here let it be carefully observed, that all the preceptive parts contained in the account may justly be stiled *works of faith*, and *labours of love*; and all the prohibited come from within;

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Mark vii. 23. James iv. 1. as CHRIST himself declares in Matt. xv. 18—20. So that the description here given both imply the *principle*, and express the *practice* of the person whom God approves for the Work of the Ministry.

A *new heart* is necessary, absolutely necessary, in order to *walk in newness of life*. He must be a sincere Christian in *heart* and *life*; I mean not only a professor of the Christian Religion, but one who has felt the *power* of it upon his own soul; one whose religion divinely operates in a humble, holy, and heavenly conversation, becoming the Gospel of CHRIST.—Felt the *power* of it;—"For the kingdom of God," the Gospel of CHRIST, is "not in word *only*, but *also* in power."—"It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—1 Cor. iv. 20. Rom. i. 16. 1 Thess. i. 5.

FIRST, In his *heart*; Psal. xl. 8. "Thy law is within my heart."—"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD (the Gospel days) that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."—"This shall be the covenant, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;" Jer. xxxi. 31, 33. Heb. viii. 10. Agreeable to this the Apostle calls the Church of Corinth "the Epistle of CHRIST

CHRIST written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ;” 2 Cor. iii. 3. and speaks of true, sincere, obedient believers, being delivered into the mould of the Gospel ; Rom. vi. 17. It is “ with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” It is here we must begin, or we build without a foundation ;—inward religion is the ground work of all true and Christian morality. All spiritual beauty in the life arises from a heart *purified by faith* in the blood of JESUS CHRIST.—Cleanse first that which is within the *Cup and the Platter*, that the *outside* of them may be clean also ; Matt. xxiii. 26, 27, 28.—“ For in CHRIST JESUS, neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, availeth any thing, but a new creature.” Gal. vi. 15.—“ He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh : But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Rom. ii. 28, 29.—Before the sons of Levi could offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness, they must be *purified and purged as Gold and Silver* ; Mal. iii. 3. the whole man must be renewed and sanctified : to this blessed end, “ God, who com-  
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manded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of JESUS CHRIST;" 2 Cor. iv. 6. JESUS, the Messenger of the Covenant, the Desire of all Nations, the Delight and Joy of every true believer, *sits as a refiner and purifier of silver*. The Omnipotent JESUS makes his *People willing in the day of his power*; now, like Mary, they chuse *that good part which shall not be taken away*;—*set their affections on things above*—have the fear of God in their hearts—hate evil—they are the true mourners in Sion;—they go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and shall doubtless come again with Joy, bringing their sheaves with them—their consciences are purged from dead works—their thoughts and imaginations brought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST—their memories consecrated, as the ark of God, to treasure up his holy and blessed Word—all their powers, faculties and members, yielded "as instruments of righteousness;"—now their persons being justified, and their natures sanctified, their sacrifices of righteousness, like the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem, are pleasant unto the LORD;  
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and themselves and their services accepted in the Beloved.

Thus in a few Words (for it is not our design to enlarge here, as we intend to resume the subject, when we come to the word HOLY) we have given a Scriptural View of real, inward, vital, heart religion; the root of the matter which produces all the fruits of the Spirit:—It is this which, like the salt among the sacrifices of old ( Levit. ii. 13. ) diffuses a Divine Savour through all means, and duties, and ordinances:—It is this that enlivens every part, and renders the whole of our Ministry acceptable to its adorable Author.—In a word, this is the living water that proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb, which he graciously bestows upon all his true Disciples and faithful Ministers, which is in them “ a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

In order to make good our ground, and, by a divine blessing, render this part of our subject more useful to all, we shall here produce from the Holy Scriptures the sum of the reasons and arguments which the Spirit of God hath been pleased to give us in proof of the necessity of real Christianity in a Minister.

ARGUMENTS.

ARGUMENTS. FIRST, may be drawn from the Nature and Design of the Work, and the Duties to be performed. We have before proved, that the Gospel Ministry is a *divine, spiritual, holy, heavenly and glorious Work*. It naturally follows, that there must be a conformity thereunto in the persons who undertake that important office; that none but *spiritual, holy and heavenly* men can rightly discharge the several duties.—Ministers are commanded to be examples to believers “in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;”—but all this is impossible for an unbeliever to do—“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?”—A man that has no true faith, nor love to CHRIST and souls, nor holiness in his heart, can never *really* have it in his life, whatever appearances there may be; no; he must first be good himself before he can shew himself *a pattern of good works*; 1 Tim. iv. 12. The fountain must be cleansed; then, and not till then, the streams will flow pure—Connected with this a

SECOND Argument may be drawn from the Names which are given to the Ministers  
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of JESUS CHRIST. They can be no men of God; 1 Tim. vi. 11. no friends of the Bridegroom; John iii. 29. 2 Cor. xi. 2. no sweet favour of CHRIST; 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15. In a word, no faithful and wise stewards and pastors fit to feed the flock, without a participation of the true grace of God, a sincere and hearty love to CHRIST and his Church, and a concern for their spiritual and eternal happiness.—The very heathens required, that their public orators should be good men, honest and faithful to the trust committed to them—Here an estate, a life, or at most the preservation of a city or kingdom from temporal ruin, was all that was concerned; but in the Gospel Ministry, the souls of mankind, precious and immortal souls, that will be saved or lost for ever—and what, Oh! what is the temporal salvation of a city, a kingdom, a world, ten thousand worlds, when compared with the spiritual and eternal salvation, though but of one soul!

Should it be objected here, that this does not depend upon the grace and goodness of the Minister, that many perish from under the pulpit, notwithstanding the faithful and diligent labours of the wisest and best of  
preachers

—preachers we grant the humbling, melancholy truth.

But this may be said with equal propriety of the heathens, in all human as well as divine affairs.—The temporal happiness of the people did not depend upon the goodness of their publick speakers, any further than as means rightly used and succeeded by the over-ruling providence of him “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will ;” as the spiritual and eternal salvation of souls depends upon him, as the God of all grace, who can still work without or even against means, although in general, both in civil and sacred concerns, he is pleased to use means. It is understood here only of the means of his own appointment ; this renders them necessary for us, nor is there the least ground to expect a blessing in the end, without a due use of the means.

**T**HIRDLY, another weighty Argument may be drawn from the displeasure of God against all who engage in the work and are not real Christians.—“ They that are in the flesh—and without faith, cannot possibly please GOD.” Rom. viii. 8. Heb. xi. 6.

We allow, that an unconverted man (for God can make use of what instruments he pleases)

pleases) may so perform the work as to please, and sometimes profit others; may have excellent natural talents, abundance of human literature, and spiritual gifts too; and all these are not only useful and desirable, but ought to be industriously improved by every Minister of CHRIST, as far as circumstances may admit; nevertheless if the greatest Minister and Apostle that ever existed knew any thing about the matter, we are assured that grace is absolutely necessary to serve God acceptably; without it we are not meet vessels for the Master's use; nor prepared for any, much less for every good work. 2 Tim. ii. 21.

Under the law, no stranger uncircumcised in heart was permitted to enter into God's sanctuary; Ezek. xliv. 9. So all in general who are strangers to CHRIST, and the life and power of religion, are awfully prohibited the Ministry of these holy things; "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" Psal. L. 16.—"The sacrifice of the wicked is *an abomination to the Lord*; how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" Prov. xxi. 27.—"O priests, that despise my name; and say, Wherein have we despised thy name? ye offer polluted bread  
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upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, the table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of Hosts. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the LORD of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen." Mal. i. 6, 7, 8, 14.

How terrible the complaint against the prophets and priests! "The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not;" Jer. ii. 8. "From the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely." Jer. viii. 10.

FOURTHLY, Supposing we should be both acceptable and useful to others, yet destitute of divine grace, we cannot benefit our own souls;—all other attainments, knowledge, languages, sciences, the tongues of men and angels, will profit us nothing, if we have not the love of GOD and our neighbour in our hearts. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. Our souls may starve and perish, it may be, while the

souls of our hearers are feeding upon the word. As we have observed, the sovereign LORD of the Church may bless his own ordinances, for the conversion, edification, and salvation of his own people ; they may have “ a feast of fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined,”—while the soul of the preacher (notwithstanding his sermon, and the LORD’s blessing the divine truths he delivers to others) is feeding upon husks. But this is followed,

LASTLY, By an argument, if possible still more fearful and alarming, to keep the vineyards of others, and neglect our own ; to preach to others, and be cast away ourselves. Without true and real Christianity, we shall only increase our condemnation at the judgment of the great day ; all our works will be rejected ; our thoughts, words, actions, hearts, lives, our most splendid performances, our very prayers—all an abomination to the LORD. See Isa. i. 11—15. Amos v. 21, 22.

Having considered the first part of those Qualifications of a Minister of CHRIST which are common to all his members, and consist in inward vital religion, or the powerful impression of the word of CHRIST upon the heart, we proceed, according to the method

thod proposed in these Discourses, to shew that they comprehend,

SECONDLY, THE POWERFUL EXPRESSION OF THE WORD OF CHRIST IN THE LIFE; or a conversation becoming his Gospel: This would lead us into all the duties towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves, as required in his Word. Our present intention is to enter more particularly into a view of the Apostle's advice to Timothy and Titus, considering him both in a personal and relative light, as it respects himself, his Family, the Church, and the World.

The *life* and conversation required of every Minister of CHRIST.—He must be a real Christian in his *life*—CHRIST not only suffered to deliver us from condemnation, but left us an example that we should follow his steps, in our whole conversation. But this brings us to consider both his *personal* and *relative* Character, as described by the great Apostle in the Scriptures, which we have laid for the foundation of this discourse; this may be considered both in *general* and *particular*.

I. IN GENERAL.—He “must be blameless, and of good behaviour.” 1. BLAMELESS; 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 6, 7. How *blameless*? Certainly this phrase cannot be intended to exclude all from the work of the Ministry,



who are not absolutely without blame in the sight of God ; by no means ; for if only such were to be employed, Ministers must come down from heaven, or the work must stand still for ever. There are none of Adam's race, amongst the best of men, who do good and sin not. Ministers, as Elijah, Paul, and Barnabas, are men of like passions with others ; none but the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls was pure, " holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners ;" all besides are *compassed with infirmities*. Heb. v. 2. Nor have we any reason to imagine, that *only* such are to be fixed upon for the work as are altogether *unblamed*—The real disciples and Ministers of CHRIST, in all ages, have been unjustly charged with things they knew not ; have gone *through evil* as well as *good report* ; nay ; their LORD and Master himself, though the prince of this world could find nothing in him, did not escape the censure of wicked men ; and " the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his LORD. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his LORD : If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household ? Matt. x. 24, 25. CHRIST says to his disciples, if ye were of the world, the world

world would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." John xv. 19, 20.

But the true and real sense or meaning is this ; he must be one who is free from all such immoralities as might bring reproach upon religion ; 2 Tim. ii. 19. particularly all such sinful tempers and practices as might become a stumbling-block to the Church, or cause the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme ; (Rom. ii. 17—24.) so as to render his Ministry blameable or useless ; 2 Cor. vi. 3. one who lives not in the practice of any thing sinful ; or by his conduct lays a foundation for a bad report, so as to give just offence to the Jew, the Gentile, or the Church of GOD. 1 Cor. x. 32. This was the great Apostle's exercise ; Acts xxiv. 16. Under the law, not only the sacrifices and the high Priest, but the inferior Priests were to be without any natural defect. Lev. xxi. 16, 17. Methinks this shadows forth, in a most lively manner, not only the purity and holiness of our spiritual Aaron, the great High Priest over the house of GOD, but also that holiness which should exist in the hearts, and shine forth in the lives of all his Ministers ;

they should walk, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, in all the commandments and ordinances of the LORD *blameless*; Luke i. 5, 6. *Blameless* and *harmless*, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; Phil. ii. 15. According to the example of their blessed Master.— And “is there not a cause?” Undoubtedly: The Apostle produces a most powerful two-fold argument, drawn from the highest topics; the *nature* of his *office*, and the *person* of his *Master*.

The *nature* of his *office*; a *steward*; Tit. i. 7. One who is entrusted with the mysteries of the manifold grace of God, rightly to divide the word of truth, and give to every one his portion of meat in due season. Luke xii. 42. 2 Tim. ii. 15. One who must give an account of what he does.—But let us not forget whose steward he is; *The steward of God*; one who speaks and acts in his name, as well as by his appointment; one who is chosen to take care of his family, and dispense his mysteries: These are the Apostle's reasons to prove the necessity of his being *blameless*; or as mentioned in other Scriptures, a *faithful, wise, and good servant, and steward*! But he must not only be one  
who



who does not *behave ill*, but one who *behaves well*, or in the language of the Apostle,

2. A person of *good behaviour*;—one who carries himself in a decent, graceful, becoming manner, according to his rank and character, to his superiors, equals and inferiors; like the divinely courteous Apostle—pleasing all men in all things; for their good to edification.—“Charity doth not behave itself unseemly,” is not only careful that there be nothing about it offensive; but on the contrary to set religion in the most engaging and attracting light; to shew it to the greatest advantage, so as to “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”

A Minister of JESUS CHRIST, as far as he knows himself, and is under the influence of the blessed Gospel, and the Spirit of his divine Master (where the natural constitution or any disorder of body does not prevent) is one of the most kind, amiable, and obliging characters in the world; real, unfeigned, and undissembled love and affection render his behaviour truly beautiful and ornamental.

II. In PARTICULAR, the Holy Ghost hath singled out the following sinful tempers and practices—*pride—self-will—sinful anger—*  
*excess*

*excess—quarrelling—fighting — and covetousness.*

PRIDE and SELF-WILL: we shall put them together here, as there is an inseparable connexion between them—"Not a Novice (says the Apostle) lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;"—for God is jealous of his own glory, and will bear no rival in human or angelick bosoms. Nothing is more hateful to his infinite Majesty than the haughtiness and arrogancy of the proud.—It was *pride* that first turned angels into devils; and this is sufficient, if there were no other sin in our nature, to ruin us eternally.—"NOT SELF-WILLED," The will of man sometimes intends the heart and mind in general; but is commonly taken for that governing power or faculty of the human soul, which chuses, refuses, accepts, rejects, commands, forbids, promises, threatens, consents, dissents, resolves, purposes, or determines, concerning any object, person or thing;—or it is the soul chusing, refusing, accepting, or rejecting.

The will is morally good or evil, as it is conformed, or not conformed, to the rule of God's Word.--As to a will entirely conformed to the will of God, it has only been found in

two persons since the world began, the first and second Adam;—the first Adam's will was perfectly conformed to the will of God; but this was of short duration.—The second Adam's will (as man) was constantly and invariably, in every state and condition, in perfect and universal harmony with the will of God. It was always his delight, his meat and drink, to do the will of his heavenly FATHER. John iv. 34. John v. 30. But it is not so with any of the human race since the fall of our first parents; the whole nature of man is universally corrupt; not only the members of the body, but the faculties of the soul; not only the lower but the higher faculties; the understanding and will, as well as the affections; the determining as well as distinguishing and discerning power; so that all who remain in a state of nature are to this day “fulfilling the desires, or *dictates and wills*, of the flesh and the mind;” Eph. ii. 3. *Self-will* then is our own natural unrenewed will. The will of man by nature is alienated from God; Col. i. 21. and all that is good; and turned to every thing that is evil; Jer. ii. 13. it is enmity against God; Rom viii. 7. A rebel in arms; Isa. i. 2. Stubborn and obstinate; Isa. xlviii. 4. Ezek. xi. 19. Zech. vii. 12.

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THE HOLY GHOST compares the heart of man to a stone, hard as a piece of the nether millstone, or as adamant, which receives no impression till God himself exerts his power; it is proud and arrogant. The language of the king of Babylon is the language of *pride* and *self-will*, drawn to the life; "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High;" Isa. xiv. 13, 14. It aims at independency both as to God and man; it is like churlish Nabal, who minded none but himself; 1 Sam. xxv. 3. or the unjust judge; all that such do is selfish; Luke xviii. 5. A *self-willed* person then is a proud, arrogant, obstinate, fierce, churlish man, whose "neck is an iron sinew, and brow brass;" Isa. xlvi. 4. one who thinks "of himself more highly than he ought to think;" Rom. xii. 3. "to be something, when he is nothing;" Gal. vi. 3. exalts and magnifies himself against God, and despises and disdains others; 2 Cor. xi. 20. Isa. lxv. 5. one who follows his own judgment and inclinations, in opposition to every thing else, right or wrong; in a word, one who makes not CHRIST, but *self* all in all.

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their language is—"Who is the LORD, that *we* should obey him?"—"We will not have this man to reign over us."—To change the laws and overthrow the very constitution of heaven, and to establish upon the basis and principles of the god of this world, all that is pleasing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is their hellish aim and tendency. What else but *pride* and *self-will* make men, like Diotrophes, to command what God hath forbidden, and forbid what God hath commanded? What but *pride* and *self-will* break down the hedge that the LORD hath set about his worship? 1 Sam. xiii. 12. What make men lord it over God's heritage, and rule them with fierceness and cruelty?—*Pride* and *self-will*. What make men preach themselves, and seek their own glory and advantage? *Pride* and *self-will*—and this is more or less the case all over the world, as far as *pride* and *self-will* prevail, and power extends.

On the contrary, were there no Preachers but such who knew, thought, and spoke soberly of themselves; were there none but such as walked humbly with their God, and had learnt of him who is meek and lowly in heart, of him who came down from  
Heaven,



Heaven, not to do his own will but the will of his FATHER;—were there none but such as made not their own will but his Word their Rule, and his Life their Example; then we might bid a joyful adieu to superstition and will-worship, with all the doctrines, traditions, and commandments of men, and devils too;—then with one heart and one mind, we might thankfully welcome the Divine Word, and cordially unite in the devout worship of our GOD;—then we might congratulate all the Churches of CHRIST in the enjoyment of the glorious Gospel.—The glorious Gospel! Blessed Tidings—as the voice of Mary’s salutation to Elisabeth caused the unborn prophet to leap for joy in her womb;—so the transporting sound in our ears would be an heavenly Jubilee in our hearts.—But nothing more terrible in its consequence, than *pride* and *self-will*; not to mention the cases of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar, nor to repeat what we have already said of the fallen angels. GOD hates *pride* now as much as ever: Though, like Edom, they exalt themselves as the Eagle, and set their nest among the stars, yet he will bring them down; Obad. 4.—“He scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.”—*Pride*  
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goeth before destruction. A man's *pride* shall bring him low : if he is never humbled for it here, like Capernaum, which was exalted to Heaven in *pride* and privileges, he shall be brought down to hell hereafter.—

The cure, the best, the only cure, is the knowledge of ourselves, the knowledge and love of G O D and our neighbour in our hearts ; this will teach us a quite different temper and disposition of soul, self-abasement, self-abhorrence, self-denial.—

“ Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own.” 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.

The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in Heaven. The great G O D and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST is meek and lowly in heart.

NOT SOON ANGRY. This is quite contrary to the love of G O D and our Neighbour, which always ought to prevail in our hearts.—“ Charity is not easily provoked.”

“ A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit ;” Prov. xvii. 27.—Cool, calm, temperate, dispassionate, slow to wrath. Not that all *anger* is here condemned ; there is a lawful and innocent, as well as an unlawful and sinful *anger*. “ Be ye angry (says the Apostle) and sin not.” This shews the difficulty

difficulty of being angry without sinning ; the necessity of proportioning our *anger* to the nature of the offence, whether it be against God, our neighbour, or ourselves. Herein we resemble CHRIST himself ; he was both angry and grieved for the hardness of heart he discovered in the Scribes and Pharisees ; Mark iii. 5. and yet his anger was just and righteous. But alas ! how seldom is this the case even with his own Disciples and Ministers ! How apt are the best of them, like Jonah, to vindicate their *anger*, not so much because God is dishonoured by the persons they are angry with, as because they are injured, or think themselves so ! How seldom is love to the soul of the offender mingled with our anger at the offence ! But “ the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God ; ” James i. 20 Oh ! what abundant reason is there for the solemn warning, “ Be ye angry and sin not. ” Solomon says, “ He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. ” He lies open and exposed to the rage and malice of all his spiritual enemies, and is unfit for every duty.—On the other hand, how excellent is the contrary spirit and temper !—“ He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his

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own spirit greater than he that taketh a city.”  
 —Self-conquest is the best, and most glorious in the sight of God; a victory which does nobody any harm, but is attended with the greatest good, both to ourselves and others.—David shewed as much magnanimity, in his answer to the proud and insulting carriage of Eliab, as courage in engaging with Goliath.—Let Cæsar and Alexander, let the great and mighty warriors, captains, and kings of the earth, boast and glory in their victories, give me the victory over myself.—O my soul! what abundant need of living in the realizing view of the goodness and forbearance of God, and following closely the example of the patient, meek and lowly JESUS. He has infinitely more cause to be angry with us, than we can ever have to be with one another. Should not all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, be done away?—How should we “put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. If any man hath a quarrel against any, even as CHRIST forgave you, so also do ye.”

NOT GIVEN TO WINE.—This equally prohibits the immoderate use and love of all  
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other liquors ;—the priests and the prophets erred through wine, and through strong drink were out of the way ; erred in vision and stumbled in judgment ; Isa. xxviii. 7. Not one who sitteth long over or continues at the wine, or strong drink, so as to unfit him for his duty towards God, his neighbour, or himself ; this is abusing a gift, which is kindly intended for nourishing and cherishing the outer, that it may be more serviceable to the inner man.—“ Every creature of God is good ; *and this among the rest, which ought to be received with thanksgiving ;*” and may, if seasonably and moderately, be innocently used ; agreeable to the advice of the same Apostle to Timothy—“ Drink a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” This justifies the sober use, whilst the words we are considering condemn the abuse, either of wine, or any other liquor.—Wine, we mean the abuse of it, takes away the heart—overcharges it ; Luke xxi. 34. turns a man into worse than a beast ; Prov. xx. 1. renders him an unfit companion for the people of God ; 1 Cor. v. 11. and if persisted in shuts him out of heaven. 1 Cor. vi. 10. It was a very heavy and awful reflection upon the Jews of old, that, amongst many other transgressions, they

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drank wine in bowls, but were not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph; Amos vi. 6.—Like the brethren of that excellent person, by whose name the tribes of Israel are here called, who sat down to eat and drink, without any feeling or sensibility of his afflictions in the pit.—Luxury and sensuality, with all other works of the flesh, bring on greater insensibility to the sufferings of our fellow-creatures. On the other hand, temperance and sobriety are two of the best friends to real sympathy and compassion, and are fruits of the Holy Spirit, inseparably connected with our temporal, spiritual, and eternal interest, pleasure, and happiness; hence appears the importance of attending to the exhortation of CHRIST and the Apostle—“ Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;” Luke xxi. 34.—“ Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;” Eph. v. 18.

NO STRIKER nor BRAWLER, nor one given to contention. It is a melancholy proof of the corruption of our nature, that the least provocation sometimes brings on such contention as ends in—What?—Let the annals of time—the history of Scripture, and our own observation answer. Pride,  
self-



self-will, sudden anger, and excess, often excite and expose a man to quarrelling and fighting: evil principles produce evil practices, and one sin indulged leads on to another.—The lusts that war in our members are the cause of all; James iv. 1. The indulgence of those lusts often ends in the *temporal*, and if not subdued by the Grace and Spirit of God, always in the *eternal* ruin of those who live and die under their power.---“Who (says Solomon) hath wo? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contention? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixt wine;” Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.—“The servant of the LORD must not strive”—nor render “railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing;” 2 Tim. ii. 24. 1 Pet. iii. 9. “I say unto you (says our divine LORD) that ye resist not evil. *If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also;*” Matt. v. 39.—“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good;” Rom. xii. 21. What then, say some, would you have us lie down, and let the whole world trample upon us! No; this is not the meaning of the text; it is certainly the duty of a Minister, as well as other men, to attend to what is stiled the first law of nature—he may and ought

to defend his own, as well as another man's life; but by no means to indulge cruelty or unnecessary roughness, so as to injure his neighbour. We know the language of man's sinful nature is, "Revenge is sweet;"—but the language of Scripture is (Rom. xii. 19.) "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather, give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, *and* I will repay; saith the LORD:"—These were the sentiments, spirit, temper, and conduct, that prevailed in CHRIST, his prophets, and apostles.—"When he was reviled he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not." Thus heart, hand, and tongue must be kept from evil, and employed in good thoughts, speech, and behaviour, in conformity to the mild, gentle, peaceable and patient spirit of our divine LORD.

"NOT COVETOUS"—not greedy of fordid gain, or filthy lucre; Tit. i. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 3. 1 Pet. v. 2. Not a person who minds earthly things. Phil. iii. 19. The apostle seems here to have his eye upon the false teachers under the Jewish dispensation, whom the prophet (Isaiah lvi. 11.) calls "greedy dogs," which are strong and insatiable in their appetites, "Shepherds that look to their own way; every one to his gain from his quarter;"

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Jer. vi. 13. Ezek. xxxiv. 2. Who, as Paul says in Philip. ii. 21. seek themselves, and not the things of JESUS CHRIST.

Not that we are to imagine, that the Minister of CHRIST should be entirely unconcerned for himself and his family—" If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;" 1 Tim. v. 8. Doubtless he is justly entitled to a reasonable supply, I mean according to his necessities, and the ability of the people.—The same Bible that forbids and condemns Covetousness in a Minister, condemns it in every other person (agreeable to this, the great Apostle, who was as free from a selfish spirit as any man in the world, and could with *Samuel and David*, experimentally say, " I seek not your's but you;" 1 Sam. xii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 14. Psal. cxix. 72. " I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel;" Acts xx. 33. also declares, " Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." 1 Cor. ix. 9. — The poor laborious ox is certainly worthy of all necessary support; so are those who labour in the word and doctrine, of double honour (nor should the best provision be *thought* too good for such Ministers:) " If we have sown unto you spi-



ritual things, is it a great thing, if we reap your carnal things?" 1 Cor. ix 11. This is only a hint, by the way, to those who, in order to skreen their own Covetousness, wrest such Scriptures, and withhold more than is meet from the Ministers of JESUS CHRIST. But the text implies the necessity of a holy indifference to the things of this life, and of regarding them only in subordination to the great design of the Ministry, and the better discharge of all the duties and offices pertaining thereto, in doing all the good they can both to the souls and bodies of their neighbours.— This ought to be the great concern of every Minister of JESUS CHRIST; but Covetousness unmercifully shuts the heart, shuts the hands, and shuts the house against real poverty and distress.

O my soul! strive—fight—watch—pray—preach;—and above all, *live* against this abomination; at the same time remember, there is a good as well as an evil Covetousness; and if thou wilt covet—"covet earnestly the best *things*;" never rest satisfied until thou art in the full possession, not of the forbidden fruit, nor the goodly Babylonish garment, the two hundred shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold; nor the

the vineyard of Naboth, nor the reward of iniquity, nor those riches where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal, which make themselves wings and flee away, as an eagle towards heaven; Prov. 23. 4, 5. nor the kingdoms of the world, nor the glories of it—no;—but of the tree of life, the garments of salvation,—the robe of righteousness; gold tried in the fire—those durable riches that wax not old, eternal in the heavens. Use every mean, every argument, every motive, which the Word of God affords to excite thy hatred, to alarm thy fears, to awaken thy jealousy, and raise thy contempt of this unreasonable, selfish *soul-defiling, detestable*, and idolatrous principle—behold it as (it really is in its true colours) “the root of all evil;” 1 Tim. vi. 10. not one, nor two, nor ten, nor ten thousand, but *all* evils; take a Scripture view of its dire effects—realize its awful tendency and consequences, with respect both to soul and body, for near six thousand years.—The innumerable sorrows that accompany it here, and the insupportable load of wrath hereafter; 1 Tim. vi. 9. which drown men in destruction and perdition. A man that is thrown into the sea with a millstone

stone about his neck may as easily emerge from the great deep, and save his life, as a covetous man, living and dying such, be delivered from the wrath to come: And is there not abundant cause for the precept of CHRIST? Luke xii. 15.—and the prohibition of Paul in the text; 1 Tim. iii. 3. —O learn to be content, like the Apostle, in every state; Phil. iv. 11, 12. embrace the precept, follow the example of thy LORD; lay to heart his poverty and wants in this world, for the sake of his Church; 2 Cor. viii. 9. Luke viii. 3. Matt. viii. 20. the views he had of things below—and set thine affections on things above; so far and only so far, shall thy conversation be without *covetousness*.

Thus we have taken a view of the QUALIFICATIONS of a Minister of CHRIST, from his conduct in general, and those immoralities which are condemned in particular; but this is not sufficient; what we have hitherto, for the most part considered, are of a negative kind; we now come, as proposed, to take notice of those QUALIFICATIONS which are pointed out by the Apostle.

Indly, of a POSITIVE nature; as hospitality, benignity, vigilance, sobriety, justice,



tice, holiness, temperance, and patience. These graces, virtues, and duties, are as pleasing, amiable, and lovely in the sight of GOD, as the evil principles, dispositions, and practices, before condemned, are hateful and offensive.—By these, the highest possible end is answered; I mean his glory, our good, and the real benefit of mankind. I do not say, they merit Heaven; no;—that is entirely free—“the gift of GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD;” but they come from Heaven, they are of a heavenly nature, and to heaven they tend. It is impossible to be found in the practice of them, without being more or less happy:—It is impossible to neglect them and avoid misery; they are the very image and likeness of GOD himself, the mind of CHRIST. “If there *then* be any virtue, if there be any praise;”—“If any consolation in CHRIST, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;” let us think of them, meditate upon, lay them up in our hearts, and practise them in our lives. Indeed there is abundant cause for every one of them; the various scenes, changes, and conditions, we may pass through and experience in this lower world, as well as the next,  
whether

whether we have more immediately to do with God, with our neighbour, or ourselves, speak the necessity of them, and they are exactly adapted to those several important purposes: each of these graces, virtues, and duties, deserve a more particular consideration than the compass of our discourse will admit; however we shall speak a few words upon every one of them, and begin with,

1st. "HOSPITALITY;" 1 Tim. iii. 2. This is directly opposite to the last sinful and guilty temper we mentioned; an utter enemy to Covetousness. He must be a lover of, and "given to Hospitality."—To deal our bread to the hungry, to bring the poor that are cast out to our house; when we see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide ourselves from our own flesh; Isa. lviii. 7. "As we have opportunity to do good unto all; *but* especially to them that are of the household of faith;" Gal. vi. 10. after the example of Abraham and Lot (Gen. xviii. 1—8—xix. 1—4.) freely, kindly, cheerfully, and generously to receive and *entertain strangers*—This is charity, this is *Hospitality*; a necessary and important office of love, every one of us owe to our fellow creatures, particularly our fellow Christians, throughout  
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the world; “ with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” --In Heb. xiii. 2. the Apostle infers an argument and motive for *hospitality* from the guests, the heavenly company, those two patriarchs took into their houses —“ Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares;” —nay; CHRIST himself.

And though there is not the least ground to imagine from the Word of God, that this will ever more be the case with any, yet we do not know how near and dear to CHRIST some who are strangers to us may be. And if ever we arrive at heaven (where we have reason to believe we shall know one another) surely we shall never grudge, that we have helped any of our fellow travellers in the road, who, like ourselves, were strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and here had no continuing city; but very often, as their blessed LORD (especially in times of persecution while the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests (though the world was not worthy of them) had not where to lay their head.

CHRIST regards all kindness shewn to his Church as shewn to himself; Matt. x. 40, 41. The indissoluble union between him and his people is the spring and fountain of  
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this office of *hospitality*.—"He that receiveth *them* receiveth *him*; and he that receiveth *him*, receiveth *him* that sent him"—so that receiving the disciples of JESUS is interpreted a receiving CHRIST and GOD himself—"He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; (shall reap sooner or later the benefits of his heavenly instructions)—He that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward (the best returns that a righteous man can make in his conversation and prayers) and whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward;" but on the contrary, he shall be abundantly repaid here or hereafter—often in this, but always in the other world. Matt. xxv. 34—40. "The liberal soul deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." Prov. xi. 25. And surely it is an high honour, and ought to be our delight, to give meat, and drink, and cloaths, to visit and receive—any way to administer to CHRIST in his members; and we ought not only to bless his name for all his benefits, but to rejoice that he is pleased to accept, much more to reward

reward any of our poor returns and services ;—yet for our deepest humiliation, let us remember, it is a *reward of grace, not of debt* ; and for our strong and everlasting consolation, let us never forget, that this reward is infinitely more than all that we can ever think, or speak, or act, in return.

The same Apostle to Titus adds,

2dly, A LOVER OF GOOD—All good men and things—Here we have one of the best objects presented to one of our best affections.—One of the best objects—*Good* ; GOD himself is the original fountain of all good ; he is goodness itself ; the chief good ; and deserves our first and supreme love.—Every mercy, every blessing, every enjoyment in body and mind, in heaven and earth, in time and eternity—creation, preservation, redemption, salvation, with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in CHRIST JESUS, are so many rays diffused from him, the infinite fountain of every good and perfect gift. One of the best affections—LOVE—“ Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.”—*A lover of CHRIST*.---This must be comprehended---because those that love good men, love them upon *his* account ; their likeness and the relation they bear to him.---  
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The important question that he once put to his disciple speaks the necessity of this in a Minister—"Simon Peter, lovest thou me?" Happy those that can answer with him, "LORD, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."—Well, says CHRIST, if thou lovest me, prove thy love by thy obedience to my commands---"feed my sheep."---And this love is necessary; nor can we feed them as we ought; (Psal. xxvii. 40.) without love to CHRIST and their souls; Psal. xxvi. 8.---*A lover of good men*—This seems to be the fountain from whence true hospitality flows. Good men are the excellent of the earth, in whom should be all our delight." Psal. xvi. 3. Prov. xii. 2. They have more that is truly valuable in them than all the world besides; they are the LORD's peculiar treasure; his jewels, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance: It is here he fixes and rests in his love.---These are honourable, truly honourable in his eyes. Isa. xliii. 4.---*All our delight*---What should the saints have all, and God none?---No; this is impossible to be the meaning of the Man after his own heart; he could say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee;" Psal. lxxiii. 25.---But  
next



next to God, though he loved, and we all ought to love our neighbour as ourselves—yet he took more delight in the people of God, than in the whole world besides—These were his companions; Psal. cxix. 63. And this is one of the best proofs of our love to God—to love his children: All who bear the image of our heavenly Father, wherever we find them; or whatever be their state and condition in other respects, to love them, because they love and resemble him.—This is a proof of our love to God himself.—“He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him;” 1 John v. 1. Although the goodness of creatures extendeth not to God, but proceedeth from him, and cannot possibly make him more holy or happy, yet it is his own likeness. The sun in the heavens is not more unconfined in its rays, than true real goodness, wherever it be found; nor does the Loadstone more powerfully attract the Needle, than this Godlike disposition does the heart of every real Christian, in mutual interchanges of love and affection.

It is an old and just remark, found true by experience in general, but particularly in the present case, that people seldom make a

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great proficiency in any business they do not love or delight in ; and there is as little foundation to hope for a man's making any considerable proficiency in *this* work, if he does not love and take delight in it.—Hence arises the necessity of what we have more fully opened elsewhere of a Minister's being a real Christian, a lover of God and man, and every thing that is good ; in particular those things which are of a spiritual nature, which every Christian in general, but especially every Minister of CHRIST, must be conversant with ;—I mean, the Word of God, the Worship of God, the Work and Duty, as well as the Office and Dignity of a Minister of CHRIST :—He is one who loves prayer, loves to read the Scriptures, and loves to meditate upon the Divine Word : Having tasted that the LORD is gracious, he is not willing to eat his spiritual morsel alone ; but loves to break the bread of life, and with joy to “ draw water out of the wells of salvation ” for others as well as himself : The language of his soul is—“ Eat, O friends ; yea ; drink abundantly, O beloved. ”—But in the next place he must be,

3dly. VIGILANT.—A Minister of JESUS is a Watchman ; Isa. lxii. 6. 2 Tim. iv. 5. and therefore he must “ not sleep as do others ;

others; but watch, and be sober:”—And “is there not a cause,” both on our own and on our people’s account? Our “Adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour:”—All our enemies watch for our halting:—We are every moment liable to fall into sin and temptation — (this speaks the necessity of keeping our hearts with all diligence; of taking heed that we offend not with our tongue)—our flock is continually in danger and in want. The souls of men on every side call upon us for help;—a final period will soon be put to our labours and our lives; we are ignorant of the time, and therefore we must watch—*watch* as those that must give an account.—Oh! what care, what diligence and constancy, are necessary not to let slip any opportunity of pulling down the strong-holds of sin and Satan, and raising upon their ruins the kingdom of the blessed Jesus, both in our own souls and in the souls of others, wherever we can have any influence; of having our loins girt about, and our lights burning; and we ourselves like unto men that wait for the LORD; Luke xii. 35, 36. In order to this, we must,



4thly. BE SOBER.—“ Take heed to yourselves (says CHRIST) lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life;” Luke xxi. 34. Both body and mind must be under the direction and government of sound reason and divine revelation, which will teach us to “ live soberly, *as well as* righteously, and godly.” Tit. ii. 12. This comprehends modesty, humility, prudence, and gravity, as well as temperance, consistent with the exhortation in 2 Pet. i. 6, 7. —*Humility*; “ Not to think of *ourselves* more highly than *we* ought to think, but to think *soberly* ;” that is, in a modest, humble manner; Rom. xii. 3. Not to mind high things, nor boast of things beyond our line; 2 Cor. x. 13, 14. “ but condescend to men of low estate;” Rom. xii. 16. “ With the lowly is Wisdom” also; we must not be wise in our own conceits; Isa. v. 21. “ Wisdom is profitable to direct,” in every thing, through the whole of our labours and life; not only to preach the Gospel, but to discharge every duty; “ teaching every man in all Wisdom;” Col. i. 28. and shewing “ out of a good conversation *our* works with meekness of Wisdom;” so that true meekness is the effect and the inseparable companion of that

“ Wisdom

“Wisdom that is from above.” James iii. 17.

This may include the knowledge of ourselves, the knowledge of a reconciled God in CHRIST JESUS, and all the things that belong to our peace, whereby we are made wise unto salvation, and enabled to make a right use of the knowledge and abilities that God hath given us.

Every true Christian, and especially every true Minister of JESUS, hath received not only the “spirit of power and love, *but also* of a sound mind;” 2 Tim. i. 7. and speaks “forth the words of truth and soberness;” Acts xxvi. 25. Not only the great and glorious truths of the Gospel, “wherein God hath abounded towards us in all Wisdom and prudence”—the highest Wisdom, but he speaks with Wisdom—weighs and considers things well; is not rash with his mouth, nor hasty with his heart, to utter any thing unbecoming before God or man; but composed, grave, and serious.—See more of this on the Manner of Preaching, in Chap. IX. on HUMILITY, WISDOM, and GRAVITY.

5thly. JUST.—“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets;” Matt. vii. 12. This is the law of

nature, originally engraven upon the heart of man in a state of innocence.—He was not only “ created in *knowledge*, but *righteousness* and true holiness.” Eph. iv. 24. “ God made man upright;” Eccles. vii. 29. This is the law of Scripture;—this is the law of CHRIST:—A law, not only like that of the Medes and Persians, irrevocable for a time; but a law, which cannot be broken, without guilt, to all eternity.—Not only *holiness* towards God, but *righteousness*—exact justice, sincerity, truth, and faithfulness, in all our dealings with mankind, in every circumstance and relation, are indispensable, both in religious and civil matters; “ not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; 2 Cor. iv. 2.—To be *just*—to “ render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour;” Rom. xiii. 7. As the Apostle says, “ Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles;” 1 Pet. ii. 12. “ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for love is the fulfilling of the law.” Rom. xiii. 8, 10. The Apostle appeals to God and the Church of Thessalonica concerning his just behaviour amongst them; 1 Theff. ii. 10. This principle will teach us on the one hand not to refuse



refuse or deny, but thankfully to acknowledge whatever gifts, grace, or any other accomplishments we find praise-worthy in others, whether our friends or enemies.—

On the other hand, not to ascribe to ourselves more than really belongs to us, or desire that others should.—Where there is no moral honesty, there can be no real Christianity, and the “unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God;” 1 Cor. vi. 9. This will teach us to counsel, admonish, and reprove our brother. Thus we must be *just*, “and follow after righteousness;” 1 Tim. vi. 11. All which shew the necessity of CHRIST and his Spirit in our hearts, to teach and enable us, not only to deny all “ungodliness and worldly lusts, *but to* live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;” Titus ii. 12.

6thly. HOLY.—A *holy* person is one who is separated and chosen out of the world, dedicated, sealed, and set apart, as the tabernacle, the temple, the altar, and priests, under the law, to the service of God; Exod. xxix. 44. xxx. 29. Numbers vii. 84. his peculiar treasure, crown, glory, and royal diadem, who has his seal; and, by his public profession and open practice, discovers the reality and efficacy of the Word and

Work of CHRIST, and his Spirit, in the inward and hidden man of the heart; who dedicates himself to him, and can with propriety, in the language of the Apostle, say, " Whose I am, and whom I serve;" Acts xxvii. 23.---*Holiness* is a participation of the Divine Nature; the moral perfections of GOD; a conformity to the image of CHRIST; Rom. viii. 29. " Be ye holy, for I am holy;" 1 Pet. i. 16. *Holiness* in GOD is the lustre, glory, beauty, order, and harmony of his perfections; it is the beauty of the LORD: *Holiness* in his people is their glory and beauty, which he has put into them; Jer. xxxi. 33. The Church of CHRIST, " the king's daughter, is all glorious within;" Psal. xlv. 13. Every faculty of the soul is renewed, the understanding enlightened, in the knowledge of the truth as it is in JESUS;---they " serve him with a willing mind," and spiritual affections; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Ephesians iv. 23.---The members of the body, as well as the faculties of the soul, are yielded " servants to righteousness, unto holiness"—he has " put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man; Col. iii. 9. 10. He dies to sin, and lives to GOD, who is the glorious author of this invaluable blessing;

blessing;—I mean, “ the LORD our GOD,  
*who* is one LORD ;” the Father, Son, and  
 Spirit; for all are concerned in the sancti-  
 fication of redeemed souls — though it is  
 more immediately, according to the eco-  
 nomy of the new covenant, the peculiar  
 office and grand work of the Holy Spirit to  
 glorify CHRIST, in beginning, carrying on,  
 and bringing to perfection this all-import-  
 ant change; 2 Cor. iii. 18. — *Holiness* com-  
 prehends all the precious fruits of the Spirit  
 —faith, hope, love, and every other grace;  
 Gal. v. 22. These are the principles from  
 whence all *holiness* in the life and con-  
 versation proceed. The Word of God is  
 the one unerring, infallible, perfect rule and  
 standard. 2 Peter i. 19. Here “ we are com-  
 passed about with a cloud of witnesses;”  
 Heb. xii. 1.—but above all, the example  
 of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls;  
 whatever was deficient in any, or all the rest,  
 is found in him; whatever was excellent in  
 any or all others unite in him; he was not  
 only free from every sin, but perfect in every  
 grace, in the highest degree; and, as God,  
 infinitely “ glorious in holiness.” — This  
 is the grand design of Jehovah in chusing  
 his people—of CHRIST in dying for them  
 —of the Spirit in taking possession of them  
 —and



—and of all his operations from beginning to end.—For this purpose, all the means of grace, and the ordinances of the Gospel, are appointed ;—every providence, as well as every ordinance, is designed to promote true *holiness* in heart and life :—For this reason, *Holiness* to the LORD must be for ever engraven upon the hearts of all who engage in this sacred office, and shine forth, like sun beams, “ in all holy and heavenly conversation and godliness ;” after the example of our Divine Master, those must “ be clean that bear the vessels of the LORD ;” Isa. lii. 11.—We must not only “ live soberly, and righteously, but godly, in this present world ;” Titus ii. 12. not only “ follow peace with all men, but holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD ;” Heb. xii. 14. What is the difference between Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and the grand Adversary, who goeth about like “ a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ?”—Oh ! Sirs,—the one is *holy*—the other is *unholy*. Nay ; might we not ask—Wherein lies the great distinction between the lowest hell and the highest heaven ? Surely, in the want or the enjoyment of *holiness*. In a word, GOD the FATHER is *holy*, GOD the SON is *holy*, GOD the SPIRIT

is

is *holy*; all the Angels and Saints above are *holy*:—Heaven is an *holy* place; and “without holiness no man shall see the LORD;” Heb. xii. 14.

7thly, TEMPERATE;---one who has the command of himself over his will and affections; and in lawful things, for good ends, can restrain them; according to the Apostle’s declaration and resolution in 1 Cor. vi. 12. “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any;”---this is *temperance* ---“all things are lawful,”—i. e. all indifferent things not forbidden in the Word of God; for it cannot possibly mean, that the least immorality could be in any wise lawful for him, any more than others:---No; there is not one law for the Minister, and another for the people in this case; but all indifferent things (though lawful) were not *expedient*; it is lawful to eat and drink, and absolutely necessary, as a means of God’s appointment, for the preservation of our lives, agreeable to the nature of the human constitution; but if we are brought under the *power* of this, or any thing else, however lawful in itself, it becomes sinful. ---Circumstances may make it necessary, proper or improper, to do or forbear many things,

things; not in themselves absolutely and universally unlawful : “ If meat make my brother to offend (says Paul) I will eat no flesh while the world standeth;” so that indifferent things may in some cases be the occasion of sin, when the weak are offended, the peace of the Church disturbed, or God any way dishonoured. “ Every man (says the same Apostle) that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.”—But we must add to our *temperance*,

8thly. PATIENCE.—This is a grace which man had no need of while in a state of innocence ;—no sin, no sufferings, nor sorrow of any kind ; but now it is absolutely necessary, both in bearing the will of God, and forbearing with our fellow-creatures.—“ Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward ;” various and almost innumerable are the trials he is liable to meet with, both from friends and foes, within and without—Afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, desertions, and temptations ; all which shew the need of *patience*. “ We must, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom ;”—and be “ patient in tribulation ;” Acts xiv. 22. Rom. xii. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5. “ patient toward all men ; 1 Thess. v. 14.—This excludes all murmuring, repining, or complaining



complaining at the divine dispensations, or the use of any unlawful measures, to get rid of our afflictions; and requires us to wait the LORD's time for deliverance. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation;" James i. 12.—"All that will live godly, in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution;" 2 Tim. iii. 12. This tries the faith and *patience* of the saints, and they have abundant need of both:—They are often "made a spectacle, to the world, and to angels, and to men;" 1 Cor. iv. 9.—All are more or less tempted. This was a part of the sufferings of CHRIST; and we must not expect to go without:—We have abundant cause for *patience*; and "he is able to succour them that are tempted;" Heb. ii. 18.—"My grace (says CHRIST to the Apostle) is sufficient for thee;" 2 Cor. xii. 9.—All are, more or less, deserted; every Christian at times is obliged to adopt the mournful language of the Church of old—"Verily thou art a GOD, that hidest thyself;" Isa. xlv. 15.—"Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled;" Psal. civ. 29.---*Patience* is necessary to wait for his return, the answer of our prayers, and the fulfilment of his promises; James v. 7, 8. Heb. vi. 12.---x. 36.---Are we wronged or injured? the forbearance and long-suffering of GOD

teaches us not to insist upon the extremity of our right, in many things; but for the sake of peace to be ready to yield. Thus we should approve ourselves, as the Ministers of CHRIST, "in much patience;" 2 Cor. vi. 4.---This is the best way to instruct and exhort, agreeable to the Apostle's counsel, *with all long-suffering*, bearing and forbearing with all others for their good---Charity, "beareth all things, endureth all things;" 1 Cor. xiii. 7.---We cannot help admiring here the truly amiable and pacific spirit of Abraham, in his speech to Lot—"If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left;" Gen. xiii. 9.---This is the only way to possess our own souls; Luke xxi. 19. to be at peace in trouble, and enjoy a calm in the midst of a storm; 2 Cor. iv. 8. this is the way to the enjoyment of every blessing—"looking to JESUS;" Heb. xii. 1, 2. "Patient continuance in well doing *is the way to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life;*" Rom. ii. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 3. ---iv. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.

Having given both a general and particular description, of the personal character of  
a Minis-

a Minister of JESUS CHRIST,——We now come, as proposed in the

SECOND place, to his RELATIVE Character, in his Family, in the Church, and in the World.

1st. HIS FAMILY.---The Apostle says, “ *He must be the husband of one wife;*” —having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly;”—but “ *in subjection with all gravity;*”---“ *one that ruleth well his own house.*” 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4. Titus i. 6.

Here we have (1) his conjugal state---“ *The husband of one wife;*” according to the original institution.---This Apostle, who was under the influence of the infallible Spirit, hath most awfully declared, that “ *Marriage is honourable in all Men; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge;*” Heb. xiii. 4. Here the *marriage* of Ministers is expressly *justified*, although not *commanded*;---*justified*, in direct contrariety to, and in the condemnation of an error; 1 Tim. iv. 1---3. foreseen by the Holy Ghost, which has sprung up and long prevailed in the Anti-Christian Church; called by the Apostle, *the Doctrine of Devils*. Here we may see the justice and propriety of the Apostle’s re-establishing the legality of Minister’s *marrying*;---I say *re-establishing*; for  
i
it



it was established long before, and practised by many of the Apostles. 1 Cor. ix. 5. But although it is *justified*, it is not *commanded*--- JESUS CHRIST hath left his Ministers in this case to be governed and directed in their conduct, according to their circumstances; to *marry*, or not to *marry*, as it shall appear most for his glory, in the purity and chastity of their own hearts and lives, and the spiritual profit and advantage, both of themselves and others.---Hence says the Apostle, “ Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and the brethren of the LORD, and Cephas?” i. e. Have we not liberty, have we not a right, to take a wife, our own wife, with us, as well as others?---but it is “ the husband of one wife:” This is the original institution, as it was “ not good (not so expedient) that man should be alone, *but have* an help meet;” so it was but *one* wife. Matt. xix. 5. This condemns the practice of *Polygamy* among the Jews, or having more than *one* wife *at a time* (for it was not unlawful to *marry* again) or *Divorce*, or putting away the wife, saving for the cause of fornication, and *marrying* another; Matt. xix. 9. and is equally in force to the present

sent day, and will be to the end of the world.

2dly. We have here the CHARACTER of his CHILDREN.—This is expressed very particularly, both in positive and negative terms.—“Faithful children, in subjection, with all gravity, not accused of riot, or unruly.”—*Faithful children.* Though the principle design of the Apostle here is to give us the *character* of all that are to be separated to the work of the Ministry, and not to describe the respective duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, to one another, as those things are fully and sufficiently done in various other parts of Scripture, yet all children in general, and the children of Ministers in particular, may see and learn their duty; they must be *faithful children*.—This cannot mean, that it is in the power of any, even the best of parents, to make their children *faithful*, or give them faith, or any other grace; no;—they have none to spare, and if they had, they have no power to convey and communicate it. It is GOD, and GOD alone, who can change the heart—nevertheless he hath made it the duty of all parents *to train up their children in the way they should go;* (Prov. xxii. 6.) “in the nurture and admonition,

nition of the LORD ;" Eph. vi. 4. to improve and exercise all their influence and authority to win them over to the faith and practice of Christianity :—These are the ordinary means which God hath connected with the end.—Thus brought up, they do not ordinarily and easily depart from it ; and if they should, though certainly that would be matter of grief and sorrow to all good parents, yet the discharge of the duty is well-pleasing and acceptable to God.

IN SUBJECTION.—“ Children *must* obey *their* parents in the LORD.—Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise ;” Eph. vi. 1, 2. CHRIST himself was subject to his parents, and his example should serve instead of ten thousand other arguments to convince all children of their duty to their parents :—His example is the strongest motive in all the world to persuade children to its practice.—Parents, as they regard the honour of CHRIST and his religion, as well as the credit and comfort both of themselves and their children, should be careful, that, through their neglect or ill management, they be not accused of *riot*, or *unruly* ;—not justly accused, as was the case with Eli's sons, whose horrid impiety, profaneness,



ness, covetousness, and sensuality, caused the L O R D's people to transgress, and his offering to be abhorred ; so that he not only cut them off, and the priesthood from their family for ever, but was highly displeased with their father ; because, as we are told, when they had " made themselves vile, he restrained them not ;" but through neglect of duty, *honoured* his sons above his God ; 1 Sam. iii. 13. ii. 29. Solomon says, " a companion of riotous men shameth his father ;"—hurts his reputation, sinks his character in the esteem of mankind, and brings a reflection upon his conduct, however well he may have ruled. — If his children are under no restraint, but, like those sons of Belial, live in direct disobedience both to God and their parents, it must be a great discouragement, if not hindrance, to him in his work ; and Ministers need as little hindrance as possible :—Whereas, if his children are faithful and trusty, such as may be depended upon, obedient and grave in their words, looks, and behaviour, sober and temperate, it is a good sign, that they have been well instructed and governed, and a proof of his being a sincere Christian himself ; one, who, while he believes the great and glorious truths of the Gospel, does not

neglect the weighty and important “ matters of the law ;” those duties, which G O D is pleased to honour and bless.—But this leads us,

3dly. To a view of the nature of his government. He must be “ one that ruleth well his own house.” Every husband, father, and master, ought to be not only a prophet and priest, but king, in his own family, to govern, as well as pray for and instruct them ; he is a man of authority ; the L O R D hath invested him with it, and it is his indispensable duty to exercise it : it is the law of G O D, that every man should *bear rule* in his own house ; it is the wife of his own bosom (1 Cor. vii. 2.) the children of his own bowels, and the servants of his own family ; and the nearer the relation, the more inhuman the neglect of duty ; 1 Tim. v. 8. but he is not to *rule* them according to that which is right in his own eyes, or according to his own natural will and inclinations, or under the influence of his own sinful passions : No ; it is not sufficient barely to *rule*, but, says the Apostle, he must *rule well*.

1st. Here the manner of his *rule* in general is taught.—Those and only those *rule their own houses well*, who regulate their

their conduct towards them by the fixed and unalterable standard of GOD's holy Word, who have a single eye to his Glory, and the spiritual, as well as the temporal good of their family at heart; who, whilst, in the fear of GOD, with prudence, justice, and diligence, they look well to their own goings, and to the ways of their household, and maintain the authority of a governor or master, at the same time keep the patience, forbearance, kindness, love, and tenderness of a father;—those who, like Abraham, Joshua, and David, “command *their* children and *family* after *them* to serve and walk before the LORD, in a perfect and upright way; Gen. xviii. 19. Joshua xxiv. 15. Psalm ci. 2. who, by precept and example, “train up *their* children in the way *they* should go;” not in the way of their own hearts, or in the way they *would* go, if left to themselves, and the way all mankind go by nature, “fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and the mind;”—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;” in the *broad way to destruction*; but in the way *they* should go; in *the way that leadeth to life*; in GOD's way; the way that he hath marked out in his Word; the way of his commandments; in that “new and living way, which JESUS



hath opened and consecrated for us," who is himself *the way*, the *only way* of access to God; the *only way* of acceptance with him; the *only way* from a state of sin to a state of grace; the *only way* from a state of grace to a state of perfect glory;---the way of faith, love, obedience, holiness, and happiness:—"In the nurture and admonition of the LORD;" in the knowledge and practice of all the principles and duties of Christianity, in the use of all appointed means; "the things which belong to *their peace*;" Eph. vi. 4. agreeable to Deut. vi. 20---25. their ruin by the first, their recovery by JESUS CHRIST, the second Adam;---the unspeakable blessedness of such a state, the appointed means of coming to the enjoyment of it, and the high obligations they are under to the LORD for all his benefits. —God commanded the Israelites (and the same is the duty, and may I not add the delight of every *Israelite indeed?*) not only to "lay up *his words* in *their hearts*, and in *their souls*, and bind them for a sign upon *their hands*, that they might be as frontlets between *their eyes*; but to teach them *their children*, speaking of them when *they sit* in *their houses*, and when *they walk* by the way, when *they lie down*, and when *they rise*

*rise up ;*" Deut. xi. 18, 19.—*To bind them for a sign upon their hands*—may point out the necessity of knowledge and practice going together. *To be as frontlets between their eyes*—to be a rule of life continually before them.---But we have,

2dly, The Temper and Disposition of mind, which ought to prevail, not only in his children, but also in his general conduct, as a governor of a family ; that is, GRAVITY—"having his children in subjection with all gravity."—And "is there not a cause?" Indeed, it is no light thing, whether children are neglected or taken care of, governed well, and brought up for God or the Devil, in the way to Heaven or Hell ; nor is it possible for any considerate, converted parent to be indifferent about the matter ; though it is a melancholy truth, almost every one knows, that children may have a religious education, and yet be destitute of real religion.—God is not bound to means, but often, as before observed, works, not only without, but even against them ; yet he hath bound us to them ; and much depends upon the proper use of them ;—the peace of private families, the good of the publick ; but above all the glory of CHRIST, the honour of his religion, the prosperity of

Sion and her assemblies ;—*all* unite with the duties commanded, the means appointed, and obedience to them.

3dly. The reason why he must be such *a ruler in his own house*. — “ If a man know not how (which shews the need of *understanding* his duty) to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God ?” If he is either ignorant or neglectful of a work of lesser, how shall he be supposed qualified and fit to be trusted in a work of greater importance ?

We now proceed to observe his Conduct and Behaviour,

2dly, IN THE CHURCH.—The chief design of the Apostle in writing to Timothy, we are told, was, that he might “ know how *he ought* to behave *himself* in the house of God ;” not only how to conduct himself in Divine Worship, what to preach, and whom to chuse for officers ; but how to order his life ; how to walk becoming his character, as a Minister of JESUS CHRIST. He must not only *take heed to himself* (1 Tim. iv. 16.) his personal character, and his conduct in his family, but *in the Church* ; 1 Tim. iii. 15. The great Head of the Church was “ mighty *both* in *deeds* and *words* before God, and all the people ;” Luke xxiv. 19.  
“ Who”



“ Whosoever (says CHRIST) shall do and teach *the law and the prophets*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven ;” Matt. v. 19. This is “ the man whom the *King of Glory* delighteth to honour.”

Together with what hath been already considered, we shall further add what the same Apostle says on this head, which may be fully comprehended in the two following things :—

He must labour after the highest degrees of conformity to the image of his divine LORD.

Be a pattern and example of all holiness and good works.

FIRST. *He must labour after the highest degrees of conformity to the image of his divine LORD*, as the only perfect Pattern.---JESUS was not only “ a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people,” but he hath left his Church in general, and his Ministers in particular, “ an example, that *they* should follow his steps ;” 1 Pet. ii. 21. Agreeable to this is the Exhortation of the Apostle to the Church of Corinth, and in them all other Churches and Ministers—“ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of CHRIST ;” 1 Cor. xi. 1.

In

In order to this it is necessary,

1st. That he "be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS;" whatever measures he may have already received, there must be his whole dependance;—this *grace*, and this *alone*, is *sufficient* for him;—he must be constantly deriving supplies from his *fulness*, so as "to be strengthened with *all* might by his Spirit in the inner man;" Eph. iii. 16. "Strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might," he must go on,

2dly, "From strength to strength," like the blessed Apostle, in Phil. iii. 12---14. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of CHRIST JESUS;—forgetting those things which are behind (he did not stop to look back upon the part of his race which he had already run, lest he should lose ground, but reached "forth unto those things which are before") I press (says the Apostle) toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS." (See more of this in Chap. I. on one of the Names given to the Gospel Ministry—a *Race*.) He was resolved, in the strength of CHRIST, that *no man should take his crown*,

or

or outrun him in his Christian race;—he kept the prize in view—“the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS;”—*his conversation was in Heaven.* But he did not this only for himself, but as an example, to which he stirs up all the Ministers and Churches of CHRIST; which was the

SECOND thing proposed—*He must set the Church of Christ, in his own life, a pattern and example of all holiness and good works;* 1 Tim. iv. 12. “Be thou an example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

In WORD.—They must hear nothing drop from his lips, either in or out of the Pulpit, which may be unsafe for them to follow: “No corrupt communication *must* proceed out of *his* mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers;” Eph. iv. 29. “The tongue of the just is as choice silver;” Prov. x. 20. The *lips* of CHRIST’s spouse “are like a thread of scarlet;”—they “drop as *an* honey comb;” Canticles iv. 3, 11.

In CONVERSATION.—They must see nothing in him which has the least tendency to lessen their esteem or love for the Gospel,  
or



or sink him beneath the dignity of his Character. As a Citizen of Heaven, and an Ambassador of CHRIST, he must so magnify his office, by a becoming walk, that they may behold nothing but what may be both safe to copy after, and profitable to their souls.

In CHARITY.—Love to GOD, CHRIST, and immortal Souls, the Members and Ministers of his Church.—He should draw out the hands and hearts of believers to the relief of all the needy and distressed ;—*provoke them to love and good works*, by his own example of a charitable disposition.

In SPIRIT.—In every condition, he should manifest such a spiritual and heavenly temper of mind ;—such a sacred fervency and holy zeal for every part of Divine Worship, the glory of GOD, the honour of religion, the happiness of his people---as may provoke them to constant emulation.

In FAITH.—“ Set for the defence of the Gospel ;” this sacred depositum, called by Jude---“ the faith once delivered unto the saints”---and now to him should be nearer and dearer to him than his life ; 1 Tim. i. 19. nor should he only think, study and meditate, write, and preach about, but *live*  
by

by *faith on the Son of God*;---so realize the things of an unseen, eternal world, as to draw off their attention from carnal and earthly to spiritual and heavenly objects:--- He must *take* to himself, and *teach* his people, above all other things, how to use this heavenly shield, so as to “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,” *overcome the world*, gain the *victory* over sin, and come off *more than conquerors*;--- “fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life;” 1 Tim. vi. 12.

IN PURITY.--- He must not only *keep himself pure*, by not being a partaker of other men’s sins (1 Tim. v. 22.) “pure from the blood of all men;” Acts xx. 26.---but believers should see and hear in him that purity of speech and behaviour, through the whole of his life, as may constrain them to *follow* him as he *follows* CHRIST.---“Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience;” 2 Tim. iii. 10. In a word—*He must shew himself* “a pattern of good works;” not only in this or that particular duty, or the exercise of any particular grace; but in all things required in the Word of God; “giving all diligence to add to *his* faith virtue,

virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness, charity;" 2 Pet. i. 5,6,7. And Paul tells the Church of Corinth, after he had counted up some of his sufferings and afflictions (2 Cor. iv. 8.) that they were "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" --- *that all things were for their sakes*; 2 Cor. iv. 15. intimating, that both the crosses and comforts of the Ministers are for them, and the means, under God, of the consolation and salvation of his Church; that by attending on the one hand to the afflictions they endured, and on the other to the supports they had under them, they might not only have before their eyes a most comfortable testimony of the truth and power of Christianity; but, if called to endure the like afflictions, enjoy the like comforts, and so promote their salvation; 2 Cor. i. 4, 5, 6. Hence says the same Apostle, "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in CHRIST JESUS, with eternal glory;" 2 Tim. ii. 10.

Agreeable



Agreeable to this, he addresses himself to the Thessalonians, "Ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake;" 1 Thess. i. 5. They were not only inoffensive in every thing, but in all things approved themselves as the Ministers of God. See 2 Cor. vi. 4—10. 1 Thess. ii. 7—12. Phil. iv. 9. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Rom. xv. 30.

But his religion must not be confined to his own person, or his family, or the Church of CHRIST; but be manifested also,

3dly, IN THE WORLD.—They must have no real cause to reproach religion on his account. Previous to his appointment of the office of a Bishop, the Apostle says, "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without;" 1 Tim. iii. 7. Solomon says, "a good name is better than precious ointment;" Ecclef. vii. 1. This arises from the tendency that it has to excite others, through a Divine Blessing, to embrace real and practical Christianity. All the disciples of CHRIST in general, and his Ministers in particular, must "let *their* light so shine before men, that *others* seeing *their* good works may glorify *their* FATHER which is in Heaven;" Matt. v. 16. Every Minister is called upon

on for the exercise of various graces, the discharge of various duties, at different times and seasons, not only in the Church of CHRIST, but in the *world* around him.—The exhortation of CHRIST above all requires our regard on this head—"Be wise as Serpents, and harmless as doves;" Matt. x. 16. The Serpent's eye is most beautiful in the dove's head:—We must "walk in Wisdom toward them that are *without*," as well as in *honesty*; Col. iv. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 12. 1 Theff. iv. 12. Eph. v. 15. It is one part of "pure and undefiled religion *for a man* to keep himself unspotted from the world;" James i. 27.—"The grace of God *teaches to deny* ungodliness and worldly lusts, *and to live* soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;" Tit. ii. 12. The whole may be very fitly comprehended in the words of the Apostle, occasioned by some unjust reflection upon his conduct—"Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;" 2 Corinthians i. 12.—See also Psalm l. 23. Philippians iv. 8, 9. 2 Corinthians vi. 4—10.

Having

Having entered particularly into the most interesting views of those gracious and moral Qualifications of a Minister of CHRIST, contained in the sacred Scriptures, and common to all Believers, we now proceed, according to the Plan laid down, to consider,

SECONDLY, Those Spiritual GIFTS which are necessary to the due discharge of his Office, as a Minister of JESUS CHRIST: These are in general—a Participation of all those Gifts that CHRIST himself possessed, as the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls; but especially—*Knowledge, Wisdom, and Utterance.*

The Apostle particularly mentions a great many Spiritual Gifts; some were *extraordinary*, and others *ordinary*; the latter of which, in a greater or less degree, are bestowed upon the Ministers of CHRIST, in all ages of the world;—we shall just mention them---

“ Now there are diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same LORD. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom; to another the Word of Knowledge by the

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same



same Spirit ; to another, Faith by the same Spirit ; to another, the Gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another, the working of Miracles ; to another, Prophecy ; to another, discerning of Spirits ; to another, divers kinds of tongues ; to another, the interpretation of tongues ;" 1 Cor, xii, 4—10, 28—31. The sum of all is—Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Gifts of Healing, Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, divers kinds of Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues—agreeable to what the same Apostle thanks God for on the Church's account, that they were " enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge ;" 1 Cor, i. 4, 5. These were the more immediate, wonderful and astonishing operations of the Spirit of God, bestowed upon the Apostles in an extraordinary way and manner, after the Ascension of CHRIST, not only for the preaching and spread, but the confirmation of the truth and reality of that glorious and everlasting Gospel, which they *preached*, in the skilful and courageous exercise of those spiritual and powerful weapons, " with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven ;" 1 Pet. i. 12.

Called GIFTS.—As they are freely bestowed ; Eph. iii. 2—8.—and *extraordinary*, as they were the effects of the more immediate

diate operations of the Spirit of God in the Apostles days.

Called *spiritual*—— chiefly because the Spirit of God bestows them to be used and employed in spiritual work; according to Acts ii. 4. “ They spake as the Spirit gave them utterance.”—“ Having then Gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith;”—Rom. xii. 6.

But it is the *ordinary* Gifts of the Spirit, that we are here concerned to speak of.—These are included in what we have already mentioned, and may be summed up in three words—*Knowledge—Wisdom—Utterance.*

*Knowledge*—The Spirit of God declares, in Mal. ii. 7. “ The Priests lips should keep knowledge.”—See Hag. ii. 11.—“ Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, ask now the priests concerning the Law.” This is contained in the Scripture already referred to in 2 Tim. ii. 2. “ Able to teach others also.”

The same spirit of wisdom and knowledge, which rested upon CHRIST without measure, must rest in a greater or less degree upon all his Ministers; Isa. xi. 2, 3. The pastors

which God gives to his people, "according to his own heart, are to feed them with knowledge and understanding;" Jer. iii. 15. which must imply either the food, or the manner in which they are to be fed; or both together:—But neither of these can be effected without this Gift; they cannot teach others what they do not know themselves; nor do it in a proper manner, without wisdom. With a little variation we may adopt the language of Solomon, and say, "Through wisdom *the house of God is built*, and by understanding it is established;" Prov. xxiv. 3.---David fed Israel "according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands;" Psal. lxxviii. 72. Agreeable to this, Paul speaks of his "knowledge in the mystery of CHRIST," and of being "a wise master-builder;" Eph. iii. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 10.

"Apt to teach," as well as *able*. A man must not only understand, but take delight in his work; be, if I may so say, in his own element, when most heartily engaged. But this seems to intend chiefly the Gift of *utternance*, by which may be meant spiritual liberty --- boldness --- gravity, and *authority*; for if a man hath otherwise the greatest abilities



ties to lay up knowledge, unless he has a talent of communicating that knowledge for the edification of others, he is so far defective ; happy when they both meet together.

Were an enlargement upon this part of our subject necessary, the following things would more especially come under consideration.—A view of the several Names and Properties which are ascribed to these Gifts in the Word of God.—We might then consider, wherein they are properly distinguished from those natural and acquired abilities we mentioned in our entrance upon this Chapter; and the gracious and moral Qualifications, which have been here largely described : We might also shew the absolute and indispensable necessity, more or less, of those *ordinary* spiritual Gifts, in every Minister of CHRIST, for the edification of the Church, even to the end of the world ; but this would carry us beyond our intended bounds : The relation already given in Pages 102, 103, and 104, on 2 Tim. ii. 2. and what is further to be added, in their proper places, when we come to consider the exercise of the various *Gifts* and *Graces* of the Spirit, in Chap. IX. ON THE SPIRIT OF PREACHING, together with what is inserted in the latter

end of Chap. X. ON THE ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT, may be deemed sufficient for this Subject. For the present we shall close this Chapter, intending, if the LORD permit, in our next, to consider more particularly, *the divinely appointed means to be used, in order to the attainment and improvement of these Gifts, and a proper discharge of the Duty and Office of a Minister of Jesus Christ.*

## C H A P. IV.

ON THE DIVINELY APPOINTED MEANS,  
IN ORDER TO A PROPER DISCHARGE  
OF THE DUTY AND OFFICE OF A MI-  
NISTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

*Besides all other means and helps, which may be used and afforded, under a Divine Blessing, to great advantage, where they can be enjoyed and attained—such as skill in Languages and Sciences—Lectures on the Holy Scripture—Conversation with those who are well established in the true knowledge and understanding of them—the Holy Ghost hath particularly ordained reading and searching the Scriptures, study and meditation upon their sacred contents; and constant, fervent, importunate Prayer for Divine Instruction, Divine Assistance, Divine Acceptance, and Divine Success, in these and all other Means and Duties.*

**H**AVING already considered the original Author and Causes of the Gospel Ministry, its excellent Nature, vast Importance and wonderful Design, the gracious, moral and spiritual Qualifications, and ac-



complishments required in all who engage therein, we are naturally led, in the next place, to give an account of those divinely appointed means which are to be used, in order to a due performance of the whole, in a manner answerable to the glorious ends proposed.---These are,

1st. *Reading and searching the Scriptures.*--- The advice and exhortation of one of the greatest Fathers in CHRIST to his Son Timothy was — “ Give attendance to reading;” 1 Tim. iv. 13.---“ Search the Scriptures,” says the great Head of the Church; John v. 39. --- Thus did the Prophets and Apostles of JESUS; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12. For this the Bereans were so highly approved and celebrated; Acts xvii. 10, 11. This was a blessed mean of their conversion and edification; this is also a divinely appointed way for the further improvement and spiritual advantage both of Ministers and people, for *thoroughly furnishing the man of God*, “ unto all good works;” 2 Tim. iii. 17.

The Holy Scriptures are a most precious and valuable treasury, in which is deposited every thing that we can need or desire; in order to our enjoyment of the knowledge and experience of it, God has made it our duty to *seek it as silver, and search for it, as hid treasures*; Prov. ii. 4. carefully and diligently

gently to apply our hearts to seek out and lay up knowledge and wisdom; "to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip;" Heb. ii. 1. The more valuable and important any branch of knowledge is, the more need of care and industry to obtain it; but the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures is of infinite importance, both to ourselves and our hearers; by this blessed medium, all believers in CHRIST are made wise unto salvation; it therefore demands the most careful enquiry, and the most serious examination, in order to know the mind of CHRIST in his Word; often asking our souls the weighty question he put to his Disciples (Matt. xiii. 51.) "Have ye understood all these things?" or, as Philip to the Eunuch, when he read the Prophet Isaiah, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Acts viii. 30. This is one great end of reading and searching the Scriptures: "let him that readeth, understand;" Mark xiii. 14. Eph. iii. 4.—otherwise all the reading and searching in the world will be of no real use to our souls, or the souls of others; without this, we can never be *Scribes well instructed in the kingdom of Heaven*; and if we have not laid up a treasure of spiritual and divine knowledge, we cannot *bring forth things*

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*things new and old* to our people, while destitute ourselves of those treasures that are necessary for this important purpose. Matt. xiii. 52.

Here all the means and helps for understanding and opening the Scriptures might be considered; but this we intend more fully, when we come to Chap. VIII. ON THE METHOD OF PREACHING, particularly the part of *Exposition and the Interpretation of the sacred Text*.

Every humble Minister of J E S U S C H R I S T, who is desirous of knowing and doing the will of God, who reads the Scriptures with becoming attention, may easily discern what helps he wants to understand them:—To this end, it will be useful to notice all those parts of Scripture that we are ignorant of, in order that we may be sensible, not only of what we *do*, but of what we do *not* understand, and so procure those Authors, which take the readiest and best way of instruction. And though there are *many* subjects, which, after all the searches and re-searches of the wisest and best of Ministers, may yet remain a secret, nevertheless we should not rest satisfied in our ignorance of those things, which are in our power to attain unto, as far as they have any tendency  
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to promote the great ends of our Ministry, and God in his Providence may open a door for the improvement of such knowledge; to animate us in the pursuit of such Authors, a sense of ignorance, a teachable disposition, and a hearty desire of all useful knowledge, are of very great importance. Our main view in acquiring Languages, Arts, and Sciences, and every other Branch of Knowledge, should be to understand more of our Bibles, in order to improve ourselves and our Hearers in Divine Knowledge and Christian Practice.—We should, above all, be most concerned to acquaint ourselves with every part of Scripture, more or less extensively, in proportion to its use and importance to our own souls, and the souls of our people, so as to answer the great end of all our labours, and all our lives. Search the histories, the prophecies, the types, the promises, the threatenings, and all the great and important doctrines and duties contained therein; and in every thing study to shew ourselves approved unto God; so to perform our work, as to meet with his approbation and *acceptance in the Beloved*, and manifest it to all to whom we *minister in holy things*, so as to leave a testimony in their consciences of our sincerity and fidelity; this will

give a sanction, this will add a weight, a solemn and divine weight, and dignity to all our ministrations, and the whole of our conversation. In order to this,

2ndly, *Study and Meditation* must go along with *reading and searching the Scriptures*.—Hence says the same Apostle—"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all;—consider what I say, and the LORD give thee understanding in all things;" 1 Tim. iv. 15.—2 Tim. ii. 7. By this mean we feed upon the Word of God, and draw nourishment to our own souls.—*Meditation* is the united exercise of all our faculties upon a subject; by which means we are as it were moulded into it.—In *reading, study, and searching the Scriptures*, we find out the knowledge of divine things; but in *meditation*, we get divine affections kindled in our hearts:—*Study*, when separate from *meditation*, is more the labour of the head, or the pure operation of the mind and intellect, without any affection in exercise; but the desire of finding out truth—*meditation*, which supposes and includes *reading and searching the Scriptures*, is more the labour of the heart, and all the affections.—The necessity of *meditation* is abundantly evident, and

and the advantages of it great and inexpressible—Hence says the LORD to Ezekiel—  
 “ Son of man, eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel (Ministers must *meditate* upon the Word, before they *preach* it) so I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll (spiritual *meditation* is the effect of Divine Operation) and he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee (the words must *sink down* into our hearts, and *dwell* in us) then did I eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness;” Ezek. iii. 1, 2, 3. To the same purpose, says Jeremiah (Chap. xv. 16) “ thy words were found, and I did eat them, and *they were* unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.”—It seems he had been seeking for them; he first *sought*, then *found*, and then *eat*—that is, he *meditated* upon and digested them. Rev. x. 9. Such was the precept given to Joshua—“ This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night;” Josh. i. 8. This was the practice of holy David; Psal. i. 2. lxxvii. 6. cxix. 97. cxliii. 5. xxxix. 3. and indeed it is this which makes an essential part of the character of the *blessed man*, the true and  
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real Christian ; it is by this mean, the Word of G O D becomes satisfying, nourishing, sweet, and precious to us ;—it is this that kindles a divine flame in the soul, till it burns with a most vehement heat :—“ While I was musing ( says the inspired Penman ) the fire burned ;” Psal. xxxix, 3. By this mean, the Minister of C H R I S T is, like Elihu and Paul, “ full of matter—the Spirit within ” —“ the love of C H R I S T constraineth him ;”—and, to use the similitude of the former—“ His belly is as wine, which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles ;” Job xxxii. 18, 19. 2 Cor. v. 14.

3dly, PRAYER.—For *Divine Instruction, Divine Assistance, Divine Acceptance, and Divine Success*, for the *Blessing of God* upon these and all other means and duties. This is not only one of the great and important Ordinances of Divine Service, which enters into the very being, life and power of religion, not only a most necessary and essential part of the *Work* of the *Ministry*, to which the Apostles, Prophets, and Ministers of C H R I S T have devoted themselves (Acts vi. 4.) but a principle mean, which J E S U S C H R I S T has fixed, appointed, and inseparably connected with the right discharge of every duty, in order to obtain its  
gracious

gracious end and design—*Prayer* should attend the whole and every part of Divine Worship.

It is not our intention here to enlarge upon the *nature, gift, grace, and spirit of PRAYER*; but to consider it as a mean of Divine Appointment, of deriving from the fulness, the unmeasurable *fulness* that is treasured up in the blessed IMMANUEL—a rich, large, plentiful, and abundant supply of all that GOD has promised; of all our needs—in order to perform the whole of our work in the most acceptable, comfortable, and profitable manner, whether it respects ourselves, or our hearers.—*All that we want* :—All sufficient gifts and graces, all the powerful operations of the Spirit, to enlighten our minds, and fill them with a well-grounded persuasion of the certainty and reality of spiritual and divine things;—that our knowledge may grow up to “all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of GOD, and of the FATHER, and of CHRIST;” Col. ii. 2. to draw from the bottom of our hearts the language of a truly awakened Saul, “LORD, what wilt thou have me to do?” Acts ix. 6.—to engage all our affections in the vigorous performance of every duty ;

duty;—to purify our consciences;—to gain a conquest over our fancy, and enlist it under the banner of CHRIST;—to consecrate our memory, as the ark of GOD for his service;—to “teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance, whatever *Christ hath said unto us*,” in the Holy Scriptures;” (John xiv. 26.) to furnish us for every good thought, word, and work; these are some, for we cannot here mention *all* that GOD has promised, and what we stand in need of; *but for all these things* (and whatever we want, and heartily desire, either for ourselves, the congregation we may have occasion to minister to, or others) *be will be enquired of*; Ezek. xxxvi. 37. But I am not speaking here of *publick PRAYER* in general, but of that which is necessary, in order to obtain such a *preparation of heart* as to enable us to perform the *work*, so as to please GOD, and profit the souls of our hearers.—Oh! did we but lay to heart the obligations, the infinite *obligations*, we are under to the blessed GOD, for all his past favours; our dependence upon him for all present and future blessings; did we truly realize the deep, wonderful, and all important things contained in the Word of GOD; the greatness of our work; our own  
weakness



weakness and insufficiency to perform any part of it aright, without Divine Assistance; and the blessed effects of being found in this duty, so as to discharge it as we ought;—how constant, how earnest, how fervent, how serious, should we be! What humble boldness, what holy violence, what heavenly importunity should we use (surely the language of our hearts, the language of our tongues, and the language of our lives, would be, like that of Jacob, and the importunate widow—"I will not let thee go, except thou blest me;" Gen. xxxii. 26. Luke xviii. 3.) for the communication, increase, improvement, and application of every gift, every grace, and every blessing! Surely we should then find *prayer* not only a necessary and important, but a most reasonable and delightful service. *Necessary*—as God has fixed and ordained it as a mean to obtain the end. *Reasonable*—as "we live, and move, and have our being" *in*, and derive all our blessings entirely *from* him. If the Word of God contain these things, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man"—if the contents of that sacred and heaven-inspired volume, which is the subject-matter of our Ministry, be so great and excellent—if the

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work of the Ministry be so weighty and important—if we are *not sufficient of ourselves to think even a good thought*—if “the preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue, *be from the LORD*”—if *without CHRIST* even his own disciples *could do nothing*—if the man after GOD’s own heart earnestly cry out—“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law”—How *reasonable* is *Prayer*!—How *reasonable* his command, and exhortation, that we should sincerely acknowledge our obligations *to*, and absolute dependance *upon* him, as the God of all grace, through the whole of our Work; more especially when we consider the ground and encouragement he has given us in his Word of promise!—“*He giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not,*” and will “give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him”—*for all those blessings we stand in need of*—for all those blessings he has promised (and the promise is as large as all our wants, wishes and desires)—“My GOD (says the Apostle) shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by CHRIST JESUS”—He will bestow his favours upon all those who ask aright, in such a way as he hath commanded in his Word, and in such a manner as the nature and importance of the blessings require.—

And

And Oh! how *delightful*! Would we enjoy his promised presence, the light of his countenance, the love of his heart, the joys of his salvation? Would we get and maintain communion and fellowship with FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST? Would we have a sweet and heavenly intercourse carried on with the great Head of the Church, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls? Would we know the mind of CHRIST in every part of our Office? Would we obtain power to perform it aright? Would we have all our other preparations turn out to the best advantage? Would we have the blessing of God with us, and upon our labours, we must be found in the constant practice and use of this blessed mean: This is the way, whilst we are, according to our duty, exercising all the faculties which God hath bestowed upon us, in acquiring the *knowledge of languages and sciences*, in order to understand the Scriptures—this is the way to experience the life and spirit of them in our hearts, *to behold wondrous things out of God's law*; to have our souls transformed into their blessed image and likeness, to be delivered as it were into the mould of the Gospel—this will animate us to press in all our enquiries further and further into the knowledge of the things, as well



as the words—to enlarge our acquaintance with *the things that belong to our peace*; those things “ which the Angels desire to look into;” 1 Pet. i. 12. The language of our hearts here will be—LORD, what I know not, do thou teach me—to enter deeper and deeper into those sacred mines, and to bring out of those richest treasures *things new and old*—that we may be “ *workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth*; and “ *give to all their portion in due season*;”—“ *able Ministers of the New Testament.*”—Thus we must not only read and “ *search the Scriptures,*” and *meditate* upon their sacred contents; but “ *cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding*”—this is the way to “ *understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God*;” Prov. ii. 3, 5. This is the way to get a wise and understanding heart;” this is the way to become ourselves, and make our people *wise unto salvation.*—A *praying* Minister is most likely to bring down the blessing of GOD upon his own soul, and the souls of his hearers. We must, like the man after GOD’s own heart, and the Apostles of JESUS, *give ourselves unto PRAYER.*

## C H A P. V.

## ON THE CALL OF A MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE SACRED OFFICE.

*Some Observations upon the Call of Christ himself, and his Apostles and Prophets, under the Old and New Testament. The Agreement and Difference between the Extraordinary and the Ordinary Call.—The Ordinary Call described, both internal and external. — A more full and particular Description of the internal Call from its Divine Author; its Nature opened—shewn to be founded upon the Qualifications already considered.—Proof of this Call consists in a Christ-like Disposition of Love and Compassion to precious Souls, and a Desire to glorify God in their Conversion, Edification, and Salvation.—Necessity evinced from the express Testimony of God, and the most awful Reasons derived from it, as there is no Ground to expect Divine Assistance or Success in the Work, but rather the Absence and Displeasure of God.—IMPROVEMENT, by way of Caution, Consolation, and Exhortation.*

HAVING in our two last Discourses considered the Gracious, Moral, and  
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Spiritual Qualifications, essential to the right discharge of the several duties belonging to the Gospel Ministry, and the Means that God hath appointed to be used, in order to the accomplishment of the glorious end designed—We now come, as proposed, to give an account of the *Call* to the sacred Office.

The *Call* to the Work of the Ministry is either *extraordinary*, or *ordinary*.

*Extraordinary*.—The Prophets and Apostles, under the Old and New Testament, were *called* to their Office in an *extraordinary* way. God was pleased, *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, to reveal his mind and will, concerning their Work and Office, whereby they were prepared, excited, disposed, and authorized, respecting the performance of their duty.—“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST;” sometimes by dreams and visions, sometimes by impulses, sometimes by Angels, sometimes by Urim and Thummim; Heb. i. 1. 2 Pet. i. 21, But here no enlargement is intended.

*Ordinary*.—CHRIST'S Ministers since are *called* in an *ordinary* way, according to the fixed and established rules laid down in his Holy Word. In some respects, a perfect harmony  
and



and agreement between the *extraordinary* and *ordinary Call* might be observed; and, in other respects, an evident difference: Upon which account, it may be necessary to notice for a few moments the distinction. — *Extraordinary* Ministers were called to their Office (we are speaking now of those under the New Testament Dispensation) either immediately by JESUS CHRIST himself, in his own Person (as the twelve Apostles, the seventy Disciples, and Paul himself; Matt. x. 1---Luke x. 1---Gal. i. 1.) or by the Holy Ghost, in his Name. Now if none were to undertake the Work but such as were sent in this manner, none must preach at all; for it is not to be expected that CHRIST will come again personally until the Day of Judgment, or that he will call to his Ministers with a voice from Heaven, as he did to the Apostle Paul; nevertheless (as we shall find) all CHRIST'S Ministers now are truly and really *called*, though not in the same way and manner.

We will just observe here, according to Scripture, that the Apostles and Prophets are (doctrinally) the *foundation* upon which the whole Church is *built*, "JESUS CHRIST himself being the Chief Corner-stone;" Eph. ii. 20. "The wall of the City of the New

*Jerusalem, the Kingdom of Glory, hath twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb;*” Rev. xxi. 14. The doctrines and duties, which they taught and enforced (the sum of which was JESUS CHRIST) by his divine authority, is the basis that supports the whole Church and Family of GOD in both worlds: These doctrines they received from Heaven, from CHRIST himself—we have them now in our Bibles, and must go there for them:—their authority appears to have been extended equally to all the Churches of CHRIST, as Paul says in 2 Cor. xi. 28. “That which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.” But this is not the case of any since the days of the Apostles, although it is the bounden duty, and will be the delight of all the Ministers of CHRIST, as far as they have his glory and the good of souls at heart, to spread the Gospel throughout the world; we do not say in their own persons, but to make use of all their interest and influence, in order to promote the grand designs of Heaven, which will sooner or later take place, that “the knowledge of the LORD *may cover the earth* as the waters cover the sea;” Isaiah xi. 9. Hab. ii. 14. Accordingly we find the *Epistles*, and Letters in the Book  
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of *Revelation*, directed to distinct Churches

—" John to the seven Churches which are in Asia."—" Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus."—" Unto the Angel of the Church in Smyrna."—" To the Angel of the Church in Pergamos."—" Unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira."—" Unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis."—" To the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia."—" And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans;" Rev. i. 4.—ii. 1, 8, 12, 18.—iii. 1, 7, 14.—titled *the Angels of the Churches*, because they are the Messengers of the LORD of Hosts, called and sent by him to perform his pleasure, in the execution of every part of their sacred Office, which should be performed in an angelick and heavenly manner.

The subject of our present enquiry is the *internal* Call to the Work and Office of the Gospel Ministry; a subject, full of importance to all who are engaged, or desire to engage, in the sacred employment: This demands our most careful and serious enquiry and consideration. In the prosecution of this weighty business, we shall endeavour to avoid these two extremes—on the one hand, not to give the least encouragement to any who may *not* be called of GOD to  
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undertake the important Office; and on the other, not in the least to weaken the hands of any who *are*, and yet may be in doubt and perplexity about the matter; but aim at the removal of their doubts, the satisfaction of their minds, and the increase of their joy and consolation. Let us then endeavour to put this weighty Question out of all dispute, to bring it to a point: Wherein does the *inward Call* to the Work of the Ministry consist?—What is intended by it? When may a person be said to be *called* of God?—and who are those that are *called* to the Work? Here we must have recourse to the infallible testimony of God himself, in this, as well as every other subject in religion. And as it is impossible to decide this weighty Question satisfactorily, unless we can find something in the Holy Scriptures to our purpose, we shall therefore consider,

I. The Author of this *Call*.

II. Take a view of the Nature, or shew what is meant in Scripture by this *Call*.

III. Prove that it is essential to the right discharge of the Duty and Office of a Minister of CHRIST.

Lastly, Close with a suitable Improvement.

I. The

I. *The Author* --- Of whom do Ministers receive this *Call*? By what authority do they preach and administer Divine Ordinances? (this important enquiry will lead us into the nature of the *Call* itself, and serve in some measure to open it) It is answered ---- they receive the same of the LORD; the whole Trinity are concerned in the ordinary inward *Call* of a Minister of CHRIST now as much as ever, though not in the same way and manner.

The FATHER called all the Prophets and Priests under the Old Testament; and CHRIST himself, as the Angel of the Covenant, the great Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church; the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, with his Apostles and Ministers, under the New Testament. Hence says the inspired Penman—"No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron (i. e. no man else has a legal right to do it) so also, CHRIST glorified not himself, to be made an High-Priest," but was "called of God an High-Priest after the order of Melchisedec;" Heb. v. 4, 5, 10.---"Neither came I of myself (says CHRIST) but he sent me;" John viii. 42. It may be observed here, that CHRIST lays such an Emphasis upon his

his heavenly Father's Mission as gives a solemn weight and dignity to his *Call*; such as may greatly tend to the confirmation of our faith in his Doctrine, as coming from the bosom of his Father, as well as beget a due reverence to his wonderful Person. He did not *come of himself*, as the false Prophets in Jer. xxiii. 21. who had neither mission nor message from GOD: No. "The LORD GOD and his Spirit (says CHRIST) hath sent me;" Isa. xlvi. 16. "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the LORD;" Luke iv. 18, 19. Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. Here we have not only the Qualifications of CHRIST, but his *Call* and *Commission*. His heavenly Father *sent him, and gave him Commandment*; John xii. 49. He had a divine warrant for all that he said and did: His Doctrine was not *his* (not *his* as man, though as GOD it certainly was) but *his* that sent him: He was *not only* "anointed with the oil of gladness above *his* fellows;" Psal. xlv. 7. (all other Prophets, Priests, and Kings) he had



had not only *the Spirit without measure*; John iii. 34. “all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; Col. ii. 3. all fulness of Gifts and Grace for his Churches and Ministers, in every age of the World; and, as a Divine Person, “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” Col. ii. 9. *but was really called, moved, authorized, and excited to the Work, by “the LORD GOD and his Spirit;”* Isa. xlvi. 16. Thus no man can lawfully *take this Office unto himself*, but he that is really appointed, approved and set apart, according to the mind of GOD—not in an *extraordinary* way, as Aaron, but truly and really *called* by GOD, as Aaron was, though in an *ordinary* way, as will be presently shewn. It is “the Lord of the Harvest, that *sends forth Labourers into his Harvest;*” Matt. ix. 38.

CHRIST himself also, as Mediator, is principally concerned; not only the government of the World in general, but of the Church in particular, is *upon his shoulders*; Isa. ix. 6. All the Glory of his Father’s house depends *upon*, “all power *both* in heaven and earth” is delivered *unto* him; Matthew xxviii. 18. —It was CHRIST that called the twelve and the seventy Disciples; “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when  
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he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost;” John xx. 21, 22. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were necessary to qualify them for the Work, to which they were called, seem to be principally here intended; but more of this in another place.—It was CHRIST that appeared to Paul to make him a Minister, as well as a Christian, that *called* and appointed him to his Office; Acts xxvi. 15, 16.—Rom. i. 1. And it is CHRIST that now, as well as in the days of his flesh, when he tabernacled here below, agreeable to the language of the Evangelist Mark (iii. 13) *calls* whom he *will*.—It is CHRIST, who not only furnishes his Ministers with all their Gifts and Graces, but *calls*, sends, and gives them to his Churches all over the World; Eph. iv. 11. He reveals himself in them, makes them first his Disciples, and then his Ministers; we do not say this was always the case, without any exception; an awful instance to the contrary may be remembered in one of the *Twelve*; But for the most part CHRIST *calls* none to the Office of the Gospel Ministry but his real friends. Paul was, and so is every Christian Minister made such, “according to the gift of the Grace of God.” It is a Divine Favour bestowed

stowed upon any man to preach "the unsearchable riches of CHRIST;" Ephesians iii. 7, 8.

The HOLY SPIRIT also is concerned in this *Call*.---He not only *called* CHRIST as the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, as hath already in part been observed, in speaking of the FATHER'S concern in the call of a Minister; but he *calls* all his Ministers:---It is the HOLY GHOST that makes men *Overseers*; Acts xx. 28. It was the HOLY GHOST that said "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them;" Acts xiii. 2. And it is the same Holy Spirit, who *proceeds from the Father and the Son*, that now *calls* every ordinary Minister, in the name of CHRIST, to the sacred Office.---Thus there is a glorious unanimity between the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, in the *call* of every true Christian Minister.---This naturally leads us to consider more particularly,

II. The Nature of, or what is meant by this *Call*, wherein it consists, and by what it may be known and distinguished, to the comfort of its Partaker, and the satisfaction of any Church of CHRIST.---This will appear by attending to the following proposition.---That all those who are inwardly  
*called*



*called* of God to the sacred Office, as well as qualified, according to the rules laid down in the Divine Word already opened, have laid to heart the spiritual necessities of their fellow-creatures; are willing, ready, and desirous, like their blessed LORD, to undertake the Work; not from any selfish or worldly motive, but from a principle of glorifying God, in the conversion, edification, and salvation of precious and immortal souls.—This may briefly be summed up and comprehended in two words—the *Disposition* and the *Principle*.

1st. The *Disposition*.—This is Christ-like; He laid to heart the spiritual necessities of his hearers. The disposition of soul, which our LORD JESUS CHRIST discovered in the days of his flesh towards poor sinners, must, in a greater or less degree, be found in all those who are inwardly *called* of God to the sacred Office. “When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd;” Matt. ix. 36. “*He had* compassion on the ignorant, and on them that *were* out of the way;” Heb. v. 2. As God-man, every Spiritual, Divine, Holy, and Heavenly Temper and Disposition, are found in

in him, in the highest degree ; as such, he must infinitely excel all human and angelick beings in every perfection:—But if we search the whole Scriptures, we shall find no disposition of soul more conspicuous than his *compassion*.---It is not intended here to wander from the subject ; but would we know the original moving Cause of all spiritual and eternal blessings—would we enquire the reason why he undertook and executed the wonderful and all-important plan of our redemption and salvation---why he continues *at the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens*, carrying on the same glorious design, and why he will continue till the whole of his redeemed are with him, where he is, *to behold and enjoy his Glory* ?---It is answered, in one word—*Compassion*; and it was the same *compassion*, which *moved* his heart, which made his bowels yearn over the *fainting* multitude, who “ were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd” (Matt. ix. 36. Mark vi. 34.) and were in destitute, forlorn, melancholy circumstances;---but the famine amongst them was not more of bread and of water than of hearing the Word ; they were in danger every moment of becoming a prey to *the roaring lion, who goeth* “ about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. v. 8.) It was this

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which occasioned his affecting speech to his Disciples---“ The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his Harvest ;” Matthew ix. 7, 38. Luke x. 2. There was a blessed prospect of precious souls being ripened and prepared for Glory, but *labourers were few*—few that loved the Work, and were willing, like the Apostle (2 Cor. xii. 15.) to “ spend and be spent for *Christ and souls* ;” for this reason they must pray---“ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his Harvest ;”---as though he had said, finding things in such melancholy circumstances, the misery of mankind around so great, and yet beholding such a prospect, go to my heavenly Father, “ his tender mercies are over all his works,” but especially over his Church;—go and tell him the case ; tell him how it stands---that precious souls are flocking to hear the Word, that they are *all attention* ; that it seems as though they longed to know *the things concerning their peace* ; but they want teachers, they want instruction, they want the Gospel ;—tell him, that he is “ the Lord of the Harvest ;” the *Harvest* is his ; it is he who sends forth *labourers* ; and



and he expects that you should *ask*, he commands you to *enquire* for all *those things* which are *needful* for yourselves or your hearers: Make this your plea---O thou Father of mercies, thou art the *Lord of the Harvest*, how shall the Harvest be gathered in? how wilt thou get Glory to thy most adorable Name?—"The **LORD**, the **LORD GOD**, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exod. xxxiv. 6.) without the use of those means, and the administration of those ordinances, which thou thyself, in thine own infinite Wisdom, Love, and Goodness, hast been pleased to appoint, and most graciously promised to bless, for the glorious purposes which thou hast designed?---Hence it appears, that our **LORD JESUS CHRIST** was deeply affected with the ruin and misery of fallen man; like the good Samaritan, he laid their case to heart, and this influenced all his actions towards them; the same should be the case with all his followers, but especially his Ministers:—This should appear, by their being willing, ready, and desirous to engage in the work.—The *call* of **CHRIST** to his Office, as Mediator in general, and as the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls in particular, affords a perfect rule for all

his Ministers in this respect; when his heavenly Father, and the holy and eternal Spirit, in the Counsels of Peace, proposed the grand and glorious Question, on which all our salvation depended—Whether he would give “his soul an offering for sin?” (Isa. liii. 10.) his Answer was—“Lo! I come to do thy will, O God;” Heb. x. 7.—He was not only *able*, but *willing*, ready and desirous to engage in the work;—“I delight (says the *altogether* LOVELY) to do thy Will, O my God; yea; thy Law is within my heart, *in the midst of my bowels*;—I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest;” Psal. xl. 8, 9. It is true, some of the best of men under the Old and New Testament, through mistrust or unbelief, have been greatly harrassed and perplexed with doubts and fears, as well as backward and reluctant on the one hand, or, from a sense of the greatness of the Work on the other, have been as it were overwhelmed in the view and prospect of it. Hence we hear the very man, who was meek above all the men upon the earth—we hear even a Moses complaining—“O my LORD, I am not eloquent; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue; send, I pray thee, by the  
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hand of him whom thou wilt send ;" Exod. iv. 10, 13. Here we find the LORD's anger was kindled against his servant Moses ; from which it is manifest, that there must be something sinful in the objections he made time after time, amidst the repeated proofs that GOD had given of his power, presence, and faithfulness, which appear to have arisen from unbelief, distrust, and the fear of man.—Again, we hear of Jeremiah's crying out—" Ah, LORD, I cannot speak, for I am a child ;" Jer. i. 6.—And even the Man who " was caught up into Paradise"— " to the third Heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) has put the humbling, creature-debasing, God-exalting, weighty and important Question—" Who is sufficient for these things ?" And it is a great mercy to be truly sensible of our own insufficiency ; without this conviction, we shall never depend as we ought upon the all-sufficiency of the great and glorious Head of the Church, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls.—Notwithstanding what we have said here, those who know themselves, the nature of fallen man, the spirituality of the blessed Gospel, the various trials and afflictions, which every faithful Minister of JESUS CHRIST is exposed to, both from within and without, will not so



much wonder at the backwardness and aversion, which arises in the mind, contrary to the *call* and will of God; but in proportion to the conviction a sincere Christian has of his being *called* of God to the work and office of the Gospel Ministry, all this reluctance, from whatever quarter it arises, is turned sooner or later into *obedience, willingness, and trust*: The gracious promise of Divine Assistance, that accompanies the *call* itself, as a token of the good pleasure of God, is an immovable basis for his soul to rest upon. "Certainly I will be with thee"—"to deliver thee, saith the LORD;" Exod. iii. 12. Jer. i. 8. "Lo, I am with you alway (says the gracious and omnipresent Redeemer) even unto the end of the world;" Matt. xxviii. 20. (but this Promise is intended to be more fully opened, when we come to that part of our Work which relates to *the Spirit of Preaching*.)—This makes the soul, as Isaiah, when *his lips were touched with a live coal from the altar*, ready and desirous to undertake the office, to walk, to run; or, like the *Seraphim*, to fly on his errands--- "Here am I (LORD) send me;" Isa. vi. 6, 7, 8. This Promise bears down all opposition before it, and makes a person willing to "spend and be spent" in the service of so good, so great,

great, and glorious a Master. This is a temper of mind required in all that are *called* to the office—"Not by constraint (says the Apostle) but willingly;" 1 Pet. v. 2.—Our duty should be our delight, our work our pleasure; the interest, the honour, and glory of CHRIST, and the happiness of his Church, "the joy and rejoicing of *our hearts*." But this leads us to examine,

2dly, The *Principle* from whence this *Disposition of Mind*, this inclination and affection to the Work, must spring, before a man can be said to be inwardly *called* and chosen of GOD to the sacred Office of the Gospel Ministry.

1. Not from any selfish or worldly motive—"Not by constraint," says the Apostle; 1 Pet. v. 2. neither friends, relations, interest, nor any thing whatever, that hath any tendency to bias the mind, should have the least weight or influence in this respect. (See 1 Sam. ii. 36.) "Not for filthy lucre's sake," say the two great Apostles (1 Tim. ii. 8. Tit. i. 7, 11. 1 Pet. v. 2.) i. e. any worldly profit, or outward advantage, that may arise from such an Office: Not with any covetous view (See Chap. III. on the Words—"NOT COVETOUS." P. 134.)—Called *filthy lucre*, because it defiles the soul who is under its influence. We are told, in Micah iii. 11.

that “ the *false* Prophets divine for money (this was a proof that they were not sent of God) yet (says the Prophet) will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us ?”——We now come to consider,

2. That all those who are inwardly *called* to the Work engage in it from a principle of glorifying God, in the conversion, edification, and salvation of precious and immortal souls.—This is the great end of the Gospel Ministry, which hath been already considered in Chap. I. and therefore here will need no further enlargement.

We are authorized from the Divine Word to declare, without the least hesitation, that whoever is qualified, according to the rules laid down in the Holy Scriptures, and falls in with this grand design, in heart and life, is a true Minister of JESUS CHRIST: CHRIST himself appeals to this, both for the reality and Divinity of his message and mission — “ He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory ; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true ;” John vii. 18. CHRIST’S “ meat *was* to do the will of *his heavenly Father*, and to finish his Work ;” John iv. 34. When he *called* his Disciples, the language he made use of was—“ follow me ;” and so in effect he now  
says



says to all those whom he *calls* to the work of the Ministry—"follow me;"---not only as a Christian, "let *the same* mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS" (Phil. ii. 5.) but as a Minister, I leave you a perfect example, to aim to live and preach as I did.

III. Prove that this *Call* is essential to the Discharge of the Ministerial Office. —This might be inferred from the Names by which the Ministers of CHRIST are called in Scripture---As *Ambassadors* are sent —*Angels* are sent---with numerous other Titles, which will not at present be entered upon: We shall produce a few of the most pertinent Scriptures expressly to the point in hand.—We have a most heavy complaint lodged by GOD himself against some in Jer. xxiii. 21, 22. "I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings."—Here we may see the necessity of a Divine *Call* and Mission, as well as of keeping close to a Divine Message. What our LORD JESUS CHRIST says of himself, in John x. 2. is in some measure true of *all* his Ministers—"He that  
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entereth in by the Door is the Shepherd of the Sheep."—A Divine *Call*, Mission, Commission, and Authority, is the *door* of entrance into the Pastoral Office, according to the Apostle's weighty Question--- "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" Rom. x. 15.---*Sent* of GOD---for a person may be *sent* of men to preach the Gospel; the Church of CHRIST and his Ministers may unite in his *Call* and Mission; all which is not only desirable, but in *ordinary* cases *necessary* (and this is what we are here speaking of) for no man hath a right to thrust himself into any Church whatever, or perform any Pastoral Office, without their *call* and approbation: But all this may be, and yet a person not *called* and *sent* of GOD to the Work.

1st. Without this inward *Call*, we have no reason to expect Divine Assistance: The Promise of CHRIST's *presence*, in Matt. xxviii. 20. is only made to those that he *calls* and *sends* to the Work. Nor,

2dly, Without this, have we any ground to expect a Divine Blessing upon our labours.—The LORD declares of those that *be sent not*, nor *commanded*, that "they *should* not profit the people at all;" and the reason he gives is—because he "sent them not, nor command-  
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ed them." We do not say, that this is all the reason, for it is asserted, that they "*stole his words, every one from his neighbour; prophesied false dreams, and told them to the people, and caused them to err by their lies and by their lightness;*" and impiously declared to their hearers, that God himself had *spoken* to them: Jer. xxiii. 30, 32. All this shews the necessity of being *called* and *sent* of God, as well as of *preaching* his Word faithfully, in order to come within the reach of a Divine Blessing in general; for though the LORD may sometimes bless his own Word, when this is not the case, yet, as it hath been observed, the promise of his blessing is only made to those that he *sends* and *qualifies*.

3dly, It is dangerous to usurp any Office in the Church, without being *called* to it by the great Head, as well as his Members, for whose *edification* and perfection, all his Ministers are given to them. No earthly honour, or worldly dignity, can justify, or give a sanction to any man whatever, to invade this sacred Office. Saul and Uzziah were both kings, but they must not *offer sacrifice, or burn incense*. Why? Because God had not called *them*, but Aaron and his sons, to the Office of the Priesthood;  
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upon which account, the Divine Displeasure against them is manifest:—Saul *lost his kingdom*, and Uzziah became a *leper*; 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14. 2 Chron. xxvi. 18, 19. It is dangerous to *look into*, or even to *touch* the ark of God, in a profane manner, or without a Divine Warrant.

4thly, Nor hath any person a foundation to hope for a reward hereafter, for undertaking the Office, without a Divine Call, and conformity to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in some measure, by having spiritual furniture for the Work—Love to men's souls, and a hearty desire to lay himself out for his Glory and their Salvation.—The most awful consideration upon this subject is, that a person should be chosen of JESUS CHRIST to the Ministry, and yet after all *die in his sins*, as was the case of Judas. It cannot be said, that CHRIST did not *know* him; we are persuaded to the contrary; that he was the heart-searching God, and *knew all things*—"knew from the beginning who should betray him." Curious enquiries can do our souls no good upon this point; we may be certain, that although Judas had the *outward call* of CHRIST himself, and Gifts peculiar to the Work and Office, yet he had not the *inward call*, we are

are speaking of; no sincere and hearty love to CHRIST and souls, nor concern for the Honour and Glory of GOD.—It rather becomes us with an holy jealousy to examine, and earnestly beg of GOD to search and try, not only our disposition, but the principle from whence it arises; our view, our end, and design in Preaching. The *inward Call* to the Work of the Ministry is inseparable, not only from those ministerial Gifts, which are peculiar to all that are *called* to the Office, but from true Grace in the Heart, and a life and *conversation becoming the Gospel*. It is not *propheying*, nor even *casting out Devils in CHRIST's name*, that can screen us from his *wrath*, if we do not *depart from iniquity*; Matt. vii. 22, 23.

LASTLY, To improve the important subject. We have now considered the Author, Nature, Necessity, and Importance of the *inward Call* to the Office and Work of the Ministry.—We are either *called* of GOD or not.—How necessary is it to be well assured of our being *called*, not only as Christians, but as Ministers! Our own peace and comfort, the good of mankind, and the glory of GOD, are inseparably connected with this *Call*; and a knowledge of it will fortify us against a thousand trials and temptations,

tations, which might otherwise be more than equal to us. A man may be *called* to be a saint, made the happy partaker of this *high, holy, and heavenly Calling*, and yet not duly qualified, and consequently not *called* to be a Minister; for though all *Ministers* ought to be *Christians*, yet all *Christians* are not fit for *Ministers*; nevertheless it is the duty, and should be the constant practice of every Christian, like Abraham, Joshua, and David, to do all in his power to promote the great end of *Preaching*; to *command his household after him to serve the LORD*—to exhort them to it by *precept*, and set them an *example* by his *practice*, in the diligent use and improvement of all appointed, publick and private means.—But the above is not mentioned with the least intention to discourage any person, how weak soever his Gifts may be, provided he hath what is really (I mean what CHRIST in his Word makes) essential, and absolutely necessary, to the discharge of the Office in an acceptable manner, so as *in any measure* to promote the design of its institution. All are not alike qualified, and consequently not *called* to the Work which they are *unable* to perform — some have abundantly more Grace, as well as Gifts, than others;  
some



some have but one, others five, others ten talents; Matt. xxv. 15, 28. “The *Holy Spirit divideth* to every man severally as he will;” 1 Cor. xii. 11. But in a word, where a person is destitute of Divine Grace; or, if not, where there are no spiritual Gifts peculiar to the Work (such as have been already considered) where the disposition of mind, that was in CHRIST—where the principle, from which this Christ-like disposition arises, is entirely wanting (as it must unavoidably be in every unrenewed soul, whatever his Gifts are) whatever impressions of that nature he may have upon his mind, by virtue of spiritual Gifts; or whatever inclination he may have to the Work; yet he cannot be said to be *called* of God, as a true Minister of CHRIST.—In other words, if any person, who is supposed to be possessed of the gracious, moral, and spiritual Qualifications, laid down by the Apostle, and, in the judgment of Charity, appears such, upon proper trial by a Church of CHRIST; the main business of such a person is to make out this one point—that he has a real, sincere, hearty, and habitual concern for the Glory of God, and the good of precious souls, separate from all selfish and worldly considerations

tions whatever:—This is the man that is called to the Work and Office of the Gospel Ministry: This is “the man, whom the King of Kings, the King of Glory, delighteth to honour:” he hath both a human and Divine Right to engage therein, wherever a door is opened in Providence, and he and the people can *approve themselves to God and their own consciences.*

To CONCLUDE.—Suffer me a moment to “stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance”---*You*, who, like your all-compassionate High-Priest, have laid to heart the spiritual necessities of precious and immortal souls---*You*, who are really affected with a concern for the Glory of God and the honour of your Divine Master, in the conversion, edification, and salvation of fallen man.---I might produce a thousand reasons, arguments, and motives to the purpose in hand; but shall content myself for the present with one or two.---Think, Oh! think, my Brethren, of the obligations, the infinite *obligations*, which you are under to him, who lived, bled, died, arose, ascended, and now appears in the presence of God:---Meditate, often meditate, on the Promises, the “exceeding great and precious Promises,” which he hath graciously left

left you *here*, and the *Crown of Righteousness, Life, and Glory*, that awaits you *hereafter*.—My Brethren, I rejoice, I exceedingly rejoice, with you, to see a *plenteous Harvest*; “but the labourers are few.”

Let us *pray* therefore, like Jacob of old, and the oppressed Widow in the Gospel, earnestly, heartily, fervently, and constantly, with one heart, in our supplications, that “the Lord of the Harvest *may* send forth labourers, *able, faithful, skilful labourers, and only such*, into his Harvest.”—

“Would GOD that all the LORD’s People were Prophets.”—(Numb. xi. 29.) “And Moses said unto him (i. e. unto Joshua) enviest thou for my sake? Would GOD that all the LORD’s People were Prophets, and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them.”—As though he had said, doth thy love or esteem for me so contract thy soul, as not to bear even the Word of GOD from others? Because the LORD hath so highly honoured me, is that a reason that I should be looked upon as all in all; or, that thou shouldest confine Prophecy to me only? Why art thou so rash and hasty? Hast thou ever heard from me, or from the mouth of him who sent me, that I am the only Prophet? Expand thy thoughts;  
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be not confined and straitened in thy soul; labour after a more enlarged acquaintance with spiritual and Divine things; as for me, so far am I from envying Eldad and Medad, for prophesying, that I earnestly wish, “that all the LORD’s People were Prophets.”—So greatly my soul esteems the communications of the Mind and Will of the blessed GOD, “whose I am, and whom I serve,” that I do not, dare not, wish to be alone here, or to stand in the way, or eclipse the glory of others; so far from this, that were it the Will of God, I should earnestly and heartily desire, “that all the LORD’s People were to *prophesy*,” and for this great and important end, that the LORD would fit and prepare them, by the teachings and influences of his blessed Spirit, with every Grace and every Gift necessary for the Heavenly Work.—It is almost impossible to praise this humble, disinterested, affectionate, and enlarged temper and disposition too much: The great and blessed Apostle Paul seems *to have drank largely into the same Spirit*; 1 Cor. xiv. 5.—Phil. i. 18.—But this shall suffice for the first Part of the Work.

END of the FIRST PART.

## PART THE SECOND.

### On PREACHING in PARTICULAR.

#### CHAP. VI.

#### On the Subject-Matter of PREACHING.

I PETER iv. II.

"If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God."

*Introduction.—The Text briefly explained.—Doctrine naturally arising from the Passage; namely, that it is the Duty of every Minister of Christ, who desires to preach so as to please God, to make the Divine Oracles the Rule in all his Discourses; in which is considered, First, the Author—God.—Secondly, the Rule here given—his Oracles—What meant by, and why so called.—A View of the transcendent Excellency of the Oracles of God, as appears from their Likeness to himself.—Thirdly, Conformity to this Divine Rule and Pattern shewn to be the indispensable Duty of every Minister.—In what this Conformity consists.—In keeping them pure and entire, or in saying neither more nor less than is contained in Scripture.—Reason for not saying more or adding is, that "The Law of the Lord is perfect;"—for not diminishing—"All Scripture is profitable."—The Violation of this Command most awfully threatened in Scripture.---Gracious Promises made to the Observance of it.---What it is to keep the Oracles of God pure, illustrated---When we preach not ourselves, nor the Traditions and Commandments of Men, nor substitute any Thing else in their Room, nor preach any Thing contrary to sound Doctrine.---Reasons of the great Apostle derived from the Unprofitableness and pernicious Consequences of such Preaching. What it is to keep the Oracles of God entire---Like Paul to declare, "All the Counsel of God," and not to keep back any thing that is profitable to the Souls of Men; but preach all the Doctrines, and enforce all the Duties, which Christ hath commanded in his Word; but especially dwell upon the most weighty and important Matters, both of Law and Gospel---In a Word, those, and only those, keep the Oracles of God, both pure and entire, who make Christ All in their Ministry.---What it is to make Christ All—considered.*

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**T**H E Original *Author* of the Gospel Ministry—  
 Its excellent nature—Vast importance, and  
 wonderful design—The gracious, moral, and spiritual  
 qualifications required of those who engage therein—  
 Their call to the sacred office, and the divinely  
 appointed means to be used, in order to a due per-  
 formance of the *whole*; answerable to the glorious  
 ends of its heavenly institution: having been already  
 considered, we are now come to enter more fully,  
 as proposed, into that part of the Work which con-  
 sists in *Preaching*—Agreeable to this we have chosen,  
 as the foundation of our Discourse, the following  
 passage—"If any man speak, let him speak as the  
 Oracles of God;" 1 Pet. iv. 11. This Text is alike  
 applicable, not only to the matter and manner of  
 speaking in *general*, but of *PREACHING* in *particular*—  
 We shall chiefly confine ourselves at present to the  
 Subject-matter of Preaching.

The *Doctrine* that naturally arises from the Text is  
 this—that it is the duty of all in general, who desire  
 to speak so as to please God, especially of the  
 Ministers of Christ, to make his Oracles the rule of  
 all their Discourses.—*If any man* (says the Apostle,  
 whether high or low, rich or poor, old or young)  
 "If any man speak, let him speak as" God *speakes*:  
*Any man*, in *any* character, but especially a Minister,  
 whoever he is, let him *make the Word of God his rule*.  
 This is what we intend to open, confirm, and im-  
 prove in the following Discourse, in which we shall  
 consider,

I. The *Author* of those Oracles, to whom every  
 Minister should conform in his *preaching*. The  
 Scriptures are emphatically called the *Oracles* of God,  
 in direct opposition to all the impostures of the hea-  
 thens, or the illusions of Satan:—*The Oracles of that*  
*God*, whose "understanding is infinite" (Ps. cxlvii. 5.  
 Isaiah xl. 28.)—who *declares* "the end from the  
 beginning;"



beginning ;" and cannot possibly err, deceive, or be deceived ;—*that God*, whose " counsel shall stand, and *who* will do all his pleasure" (Isaiah xlv. 10.)—*that God*, who is *infinitely good* (Ps. lii. 1.) and therefore can never speak any thing contrary to the real, temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare of mankind—*infinitely great* (Ps. lxxvii. 13.)—*that God*, who, in the beginning, by a word, called a *world* from *nothing* into *existence* (Gen. i. 1. Col. i. 16, 17. Heb. xii. 3.)—*that God*, who " spake, and it was done ; *who* commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. xxxiii. 9.)—*that God*, in whom " we *all* live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28.) and upon whom we entirely depend for all spiritual blessings (Eph. i. 3.)—*that God*, who alone can *speak life* into *dead souls* (Eph. ii. 1.) whose glorious voice shall summon *all that are in their graves*, in the general resurrection, and " judgment of the great day," to *come forth* (John v. 28, 29.) and pronounce the decisive or final *sentence* both upon the righteous and the wicked " of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" under heaven ; to whom he shall say, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world"—or, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels ;" Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

*This is the God*, whose *Oracles* are to be the rule of all our Discourses—*This is he*, who inspired all the sacred writers (2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.)—" for though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many) But to us there is but one God" (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.)—The " Three that bear record in Heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST" (1 John v. 7.)—" The Lord our God, which is one Lord : " Deut. vi. 4.—Agreeable to this, the Man after his own heart stiles the Holy Scriptures—*The Law—Testimonies—Ways—Precepts—*

*Statutes—Commandments—Judgments—Word—Faithfulness—Righteousness—and the Fear of the Lord*; Ps. xix. 7, 8, 9. cxix. 1—9, 90, 172.—But the Divine Oracles, in different parts of Scripture, are also called—the Law (Ps. cxix. 18.)—the Gospel (Rom. i. 1. 1 Tim. i. 11.)—the Wisdom (1 Cor. ii. 7.)—the Grace (Acts xx. 24.)—the Power (Rom. i. 16.)—and the Kingdom of God; Acts xxviii. 31.—It is the Word of God, which Christ, his Prophets, Apostles, and Ministers, under the Old and New Testament, all preached. Accordingly what was declared by the Apostles was *heard* and *received*, by the Thessalonians, “not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God;” 1 Thess. ii. 13.—Agreeable to the ancient prophecies of Isaiah and Micah—“Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem;” Isaiah ii. 3. Micah iv. 2.—Thus “the Lord gave the Word, and great was the company of those that published it;” Ps. lxviii. 11.—Each of the Three Divine Persons is equally concerned as the *Author* of these Oracles.

“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—“God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son;” Heb. i. 1, 2.

Christ himself, as one with the Father and Holy Spirit, is equally concerned as the *Author*.—It was both *the God of Israel*, and *the Rock of Israel*, who spake by David; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.—Agreeable to this, these Divine Oracles are also called—the Word (Col. iii. 16.)—the Law (James i. 25.)—and the Gospel of Christ; Rom. i. 16.

The Holy Ghost also is the *Author* of the Oracles of God; hence it is said, “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;” 2 Pet. i. 21.—The Spirit of God is the heavenly *Author* and Giver of all Divine grace and gifts, both to Christ the Head, and his

his Church the Members ; and it is by his Divine Agency that " all spiritual blessings in Christ " are freely and plentifully bestowed upon his Church. — It is he that *glorifies* Christ, that *takes of the things of Christ*, and *shows* them to his people ; John xvi. 14, 15. — Accordingly the Gospel is called " the Ministration of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 8.) not only because it was " *preached by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven*" into the hearts both of the preachers and hearers, but because the Spirit of God is the Divine *Author* of the Gospel Ministry, as a mean by which he is given, and freely gives himself, to begin, carry on, and bring to perfection, all the work of grace upon the souls of the redeemed, until they arrive safe in a world of Glory. Agreeable to this, the Word of God is called — " the Sword of the Spirit " (Eph. vi. 17.) which is the principal instrument the Soldier of Christ is to use, if he desires to succeed in his heavenly warfare. Yes ; we certainly ought to chuse our *arrows*, like the Captain of Salvation, out of God's own *quiver*. We only flourish and brandish to little purpose with the best of *human* weapons ; but " the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow ; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart ; " — " mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds ; Heb. iv. 12. 2 Cor. x. 4.

II. The Rule itself—the *Oracles* of God. The best, if not the only way, to explain this part of the Text, is to consider what hath been already said upon the subject. Accordingly we find, in Exodus xxv. 22. that the Lord promises to " meet with *Moses*, and commune with *him*, from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims of *glory*, which are upon the ark : " — And in Numbers vii. 89. we have the performance of this *Promise* ; we are told that "*Moses* heard



heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat, that was upon the ark of Testimony, from between the two cherubims."—This was the *Holy of Holies*, or "the most Holy Place," which was a type of heaven (1 Kings viii. 6. Heb. ix. 11, 12). —Here was the *Throne* of the Divine Majesty; from this *Throne*, answers were given to those who were called upon to enquire.

1st. This was the *Oracle*, or speaking place of Jehovah; hence the things spoken may, with the greatest propriety, be called—the *Oracles of God*, because he spoke them.—It was he that gave the answers, and counsel, and passed the sentence.

But there is no reason to confine the meaning of the Apostle here; it may be taken in the most enlarged sense for all that God hath revealed, "at sundry times, and in divers manners," under the Old and New Testament, whether by *forming a voice*, or by *dreams and visions*, by *Urim and Thummim*, by *Prophets*, or *Apostles*, or by *his own Son*.

Thus by the *Oracles of God* may be safely understood all that is spoken in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

2d. The Reason why they are called the *Oracles of God* evidently appears by their being divinely inspired by him who moved, and spake in and by the sacred writers, and as such they contain a *sure, certain, perfect, and infallible word of Prophecy*.—This was according to the Apostle, one of the greatest advantages that the Israelitish nation enjoyed above all others under Heaven—"unto them were committed the Oracles of God;" Rom. iii. 2.—And this is one of the greatest trusts and blessings that can ever be committed to, or enjoyed by, any people.—The great, the blessed, the every way glorious Jehovah hath "magnified his Word above all his Name;" Ps. cxxxviii. 2.—If we search the Holy Scriptures for the express qualities of these *Oracles*, we shall find them

them declared, by the inspired Penman, to be *lively*, *lively*, and *heavenly*: Accordingly we hear Stephen assert, in Acts vii. 38. that Moses and the "Fathers received the lively Oracles to give unto us" (*i.e.*) unto the Church in all ages, for a rule and standard, in every thing that relates to faith and obedience.—Cal- led *lively*, as pronounced by him, who is *the living* God, who hath *life in himself*, and who speaks them, that they may promote the spiritual and *eternal life* of his People; as they are the grand means that God hath ordained to this blessed end, to begin, carry on, and bring to perfection, the *life* of Divine grace, until the believing soul is prepared for a world of Glory.

—This naturally leads us,

3d. To give a View of the transcendent Glory and excellency of the *Oracles* of God, which appears from their likeness to himself: The *Bible* is a Book after God's own heart.

The following REMARKS, although in general common to each Divine Person, may be particularly applied to Christ, as *Mediator between God and Man*.

Is God a *Spirit*?—His *word*, law, and gospel, with its all-important contents, are of a *spiritual* nature.—

"The law is spiritual"—The Gospel is "the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus"—"The words that I speak unto you (says the adorable *Author*) they are spirit, and they are life." Rom. vii. 14. viii. 2. John vi. 63.

Is God alone the *object* of all religious *worship* and *adoration*? His *word* is the only safe and infallible rule in every thing belonging thereto. 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. Gal. vi. 16. Ps. lxxiii. 24. Heb. xiii. 7, 8.

Is our blessed Redeemer *the Lord God omnipotent*? "The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto Salvation." Rom. i. 16.

Is he God *all-sufficient*? The Holy Scriptures contain *all his counsel*; they are sufficient to make a *man of God*, a minister of Christ, every believer, *perfect*, and *wise unto salvation*. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.

Is he "the King, the Lord of Hosts?" *The word of his testimony is his bow, his arrow, his sword by which in his glory, and in his majesty, he conquers and subdues his people to himself.* See Ps. xix. 7.—Hab. iii. 9.—Eph. vi. 17.—Heb. iv. 12.—2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Is he *Judge of Quick and Dead*? "God shall judge (says the great apostle) the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel." Rom. ii. 16.

Is Christ "the true God, and eternal life?"—His *Word is the word of truth*—"the words of eternal life." John xvii. 17. John vi. 68.

Is he *faithful*? His *word is the faithful word* Ps. cxix. 138.

Is he a *just* God? His *word is* "the word of righteousness." Heb. v. 13.

Is he God our Saviour? His Gospel is *the word of Salvation.* Acts xiii. 26.

Is he "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?" "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but *his word shall not pass away*"—his is "the everlasting Gospel." Mark xiii. 31. Rev. xiv. 6.

Is he *all-wise*? "*Herein he hath abounded to ward us in all wisdom and prudence.*" Eph. i. 8.

Is he the *Sovereign Lord and Ruler*? His *word is his will*; his law a *rule* for all his Church, in every age. Matt. vii. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

Is he *full of grace*? The Gospel is *the word and Gospel of his grace.* Acts xx. 24, 32.

Is he essentially infinitely *good*? His *word is good*—"Good-will towards men." Rom. vii. 1. Luke ii. 14.

Is he *holy*? All the Scriptures, his Law, Gospel every *word of God, are pure and holy.* Ps. xii. 6. cxli. 140. Rom. vii. 12.

Is he the *Lord of Glory*? His Law and Gospel are both *glorious*; "the ministration of righteousness *exceeds in glory.*" 2 Cor. iii. 9.



Is he *wonderful*? “His testimonies are wonderful.” Ps. cxix. 129.

Is he a *Counsellor*? His *word* contains the whole counsel of God. Acts xx. 27.

Is he *the Prince of Peace*? His Gospel is “the Gospel of Peace.” Eph. vi. 15.

Is he “the Brightness of his *Father's* glory?”—His *word* is “a sure word of prophecy; whereunto we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.”—“His word is a lamp unto *our* feet, and a light unto *our paths*.” 2 Peter i. 19. Ps. 119. 105.

Is Christ *precious*, infinitely *precious*? His *word* is *precious*—his promises are “exceeding great and precious promises.” 2 Peter i. 4.

Is he *unsearchable*? The Gospel is “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Eph. iii. 8.

Is there a real, though to us an incomprehensible harmony among the Divine Persons and perfections? So there is between the whole of *Divine Revelation*; the Old and New Testament perfectly agree;—“the law is not against the promise”—*the law* is not made void, but *established* by the Gospel. Gal. iii. 21. Rom. iii. 31. Like “the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat,” which were of *one piece, exactly alike, looking one to another, and both upon the mercy-seat.* (Heb. ix. 5. Exod. xxxvii. 7, 8, 9. 1 Kings vi. 25.) so should all our Discourses *harmonize* and *meet together* in Christ, “the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets,” in whom they all *unite*, and agree to *lay* as such. Eph. ii. 20, 21.—Our *words* should not be “yea and nay” (2 Cor. i. 18.) one thing ought not to contradict another; “the trumpet *should not* give an uncertain sound” (1 Cor. xiv. 7.) the Spirit of God is not the *author of inconsistencies*—there is but “one faith” (Eph. iv. 5.) Paul said—“none other things  
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than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come;" Acts xxvi. 22.

Here might be an enlargement on the confirmation of the Divinity, perfection, beauty, glory, majesty, and infinite importance of the Holy Scriptures; but this is not the present business.—We are,

III. To shew that *conformity* to this Divine rule and pattern is the indispensable duty of every minister. We *must* "speak as the Oracles of God;" if we would preach agreeably to his mind and will, we *must* make his *word* our *rule*:—"To the law and to the testimony; if *any man* speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in *him*;" Isa. viii. 20.—"As Moses was admonished of God to make all things *in the Tabernacle* according to the pattern shewed to *him* in the mount" (Heb. viii. 5.) so we must form all our Discourses upon the model of Divine Revelation. These Oracles at all times are to be consulted as *the men of our counsel*; Ps. cxix. 24. Jeremiah must *speak* what God *commands* him (Jer. i. 7).—Ezekiel must *bear the word at God's mouth*, and *warn the people from him* (Ezek. iii. 17).—Jonah must *preach* what God *bids* him (Jonah iii. 2).—In like manner we are informed, that Ezekiel "prophesied as *he* was commanded" (Ezek. xxxvii. 7).—Paul "delivered *in his ministry*, that which *he* also received" of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. xv. 3.) this glorious Person himself received of his heavenly Father all that he made known to the Church (John iii. 32.) so must we, like Job, the holy Prophets and Apostles, and above all, like our Divine Master, receive the law from God's mouth (Mal. ii. 7.) and resolve, like Micaiah, in the strength of Christ "as the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto us that *we* will speak;" 1 Kings xxii. 14.

We are now come to shew more fully in what this *conformity* to the Oracles of God consists; namely, in keeping them *pure* and *entire*.—If we duly "search

the Scriptures" upon this head, we shall find the Old Testament Prophets, as Moses, who "was meek, above all the men which were upon the earth" (Numb. xii. 3.) and Solomon, *the wisest of men*, whose capacious soul was like "the sand that is on the sea shore" (1 Kings iv. 29.) as well as Paul, who "was caught up into Paradise"—"to the third Heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) and a greater than Moses, or Solomon, or Paul, *supplying* us with a full and decisive answer, in the most solemn language, in the most express precepts, prohibitions, penalties, and promises, the more effectually to engage our hearts in the work: Thus saith the Oracle of Heaven—"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it" (Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32.)—"diminish not a word;" Jer. xxvi. 2.—"Though we (says Paul) or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed;" Gal. i. 8, 9—"Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto;" Gal. iii. 15.—"Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar;" Prov. xxx. 6. And (if possible more dreadful still) "I testify (says *the faithful and true witness*—I, who am able to put the sentence into execution) *I testify* unto every man (not one excepted) that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man (let him be who he will) shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book;" Rev. xxii. 18, 19.—Thus as the tree of life in Paradise was guarded with *cherubims and a flaming sword* (Gen. iii. 24.) so the book of life (to prevent every encroachment upon the rights of Heaven, and the Divine prerogative) the Word and Oracles of God, is guarded with the most



fearful curse, and the addition *to*, or diminution *from* them, threatened with the most tremendous vengeance. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. v. 19.) he shall have no part nor lot in that glorious state and place, he shall never enter those blissful regions—How can we forbear, in the hearing of these terrible threatenings, to stand in awe of God's Word!

On the other hand, let us consider, and realize the promises, "the exceeding great and precious promises," which are made to all those who endeavour to keep them *pure* and *entire*.—"But whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. v. 19.) he shall not only be *esteemed* "very highly in love for *his* works sake," in the Church Militant (1 Thess. v. 13.) "*but* (says the blessed God) them that honour me I will honour;" 1 Sam. ii. 30.—Yes; this is *the man*, this is *the minister*, "whom the King of kings delighteth to honour;" Esther vi. 6. the Lord hath promised *to be* with such *to the end of the world* (Matt. xxviii. 20.) nor will the promise be finally accomplished here, but the same will be fulfilling throughout eternity in the Church Triumphant. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" Rev. ii. 10.

The sacred Oracles furnish us with two of the most weighty and important reasons why the ministers of Christ should not *add* nor *diminish* from his Word.—They must not *add*, because "the Law of the Lord is perfect;" Psal. xix. 7.—they must not *diminish* for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

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Thus far we have considered, that to "speak as the Oracles of God" is to keep them *pure* and *entire*. But such is the nature and importance of this part of our Subject, that it justly demands a more full and particular illustration; accordingly we shall consider what it is to keep them both *pure* and *entire*.

First, *PURE*.—Then only can a person be said to keep them *pure*, when he *adds* nothing *to*, nor substitutes any thing else *in* their room; but carefully avoids whatever is contrary to sound doctrine and Christian practice.

1st. We must not *preach ourselves*. Hence we find the same Apostle, in laying down the Qualifications essential to the Gospel Ministry, expressly prohibiting Timothy and Titus the choice of a person for a Minister who is in danger of "being lifted up with pride"—"not self-willed"—"not covetous;" 1 Tim. i. 3, 6. Tit. i. 7.—Here we may clearly perceive abundant reason for those prohibitions, because *such* are most liable to *preach themselves*, and *not* Christ Jesus the Lord.

Even renewed souls, the most humble, faithful, and disinterested stewards, and Ambassadors of Christ, and *self*, in various forms, too ready to mingle with their most spiritual duties.—This *self*, like the busy adversary, who, "when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, came also among them" (Job i. 6.) this worst of enemies to our souls, too often gets admission into the *pulpit*; yet, upon the whole, by Divine grace, all the true Ministers of Christ can say, at least in heart and intention—"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;"—we do not set up ourselves as the authors—we do not make ourselves the subject-matter—we do not consider ourselves as the end of the Gospel Ministry—but we set forth the person, offices, and Glory of our Divine Master.—And let be observed, that this is the way to secure our true,

true, best, highest interest, honour and happiness. But it is a matter of no small importance earnestly to consider and lay to heart what is meant by *preaching ourselves*, that, by the grace of God, we may never fall into such a Christ-dishonouring practice.

Do we lean to our own understanding; or set up our own wisdom as an Oracle; or mingle our inventions with Divine Revelation; or deliver to our hearers the visions, dreams, and deceits of our own heart, instead of the Word that comes from the mouth of the Lord?—Do we make our own will a law, assume dominion over the persons, faith, or consciences of our people; or lord it over God's heritage?—Do we follow our own dispositions, and vent our own sinful prejudices and passions, instead of imbibing the apostolick temper, and addressing our people, like the tender-hearted Paul, “in the bowels and affections of Jesus Christ?”—Do we depend or teach others to depend, upon our own righteousness to justify?—Do we rely, or teach others to rely, on our own strength to sanctify?—Do we suppose that we are able even to think a good thought, speak the least good word, or perform any good work?—Do we “sacrifice unto *our* net, and burn incense unto *our own* drag?”—In a word, do we seek our own profit, or pleasure, or praise, and draw a veil over the glory, the matchless, unparalleled infinite glory of the ever-adorable Redeemer?—This is all *self*, altogether *self*, and nothing but *self*.

But, says the Apostle, “we preach not ourselves;” 2 Cor. iv. 5.—Happy Paul!—Happy preachers!—“We preach not ourselves;”—we do not “lean unto *our* own understanding” or wisdom, but upon “Christ the Wisdom of God;” we simply and entirely depend upon his Word as our rule, and rely on the Divine Spirit to render the same effectual to the conversion, edification, and compleat and eternal salvation of our hearers: We do not make our own

will,



will, but the *will* of our Divine Lord, the rule and standard of our preaching; nor do we follow our own dispositions;—no; we have *drank into his Spirit*; and we “long after *our bearers* in the bowels of Jesus Christ;”—his “love constraineth us.”—“*Our hearts desire and prayer to God for our people is, that they might be saved.*”—We do not go “about to establish *our own righteousness*,” but the perfect, glorious, everlasting *righteousness*, wrought out by the obedience even unto death of our now-risen, ascended, exalted, adored High Priest, which is “unto all, and upon all them that believe.”—We are sensible of our weakness; “we *do not* trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.”—Our strength for sanctification, and our ability and sufficiency for the performance of every good work, are from Him, who hath “all power in Heaven and in earth.”—It is not our own secular advantage, or the enjoyments of this lower world, or the honour that cometh from man that we seek; but the interest of the blessed Jesus—the spread and success of his Gospel in all nations—the triumphs of his cross—the enlargement of his kingdom—the glory of his name; and the honour of his excellent Majesty.”—This is not to *preach ourselves*;—no; but to exalt Christ, and Christ alone.—Here we might enlarge upon the weighty, wonderful, and exalted Offices of the Saviour; but we shall for the present proceed to consider, agreeably to the Plan laid down,

Secondly, That the Oracles of God equally and expressly prohibit our “*preaching* for doctrines the *traditions and commandments of men*”—“all profane fables”—“foolish and unlearned questions”—endless genealogies”—“contentions and strivings about the law”—“profane and vain babblings”—philosophy and vain deceit”—“and oppositions of science, falsely so called:” Matt. xv. 3—9. Mark vii. 8—13. 2 Pet. i. 16.

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Tit. i. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 23. 1 Tim. i. 4. Tit. ii. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 16. Col. ii. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 20.—These are all thrown together, because as they are not to be taught, so they do not properly belong to the Subject; nor are we any further concerned to explain their nature, than to shew their evil tendency, when substituted in the room of the Oracles of God.—Here briefly shall be studied, and nothing more attempted than a concise explanation of their nature, and a description of their evil tendency.

As to their *nature*—*Traditions*, or *things*, which were handed down from age to age, without being committed to writing; some whereof were trifling, some whimsical, some very wicked, particularly such as are referred to in Mark vii. 2—8. “In vain do they worship me (says Christ) teaching for doctrine (i. e. in the room of Divine institutions) the commandments of men.” As to the traditions they taught “as the washing of *hands*, and cups, and pots, and brasen vessels, and tables—and many other such like things,” which were of an indifferent nature in themselves, and might either be done or left undone as occasion required; but had nothing to do with the faith or practice of Religion, any further than common decency made it necessary; the sinfulness of their conduct here consisted not in doing these things, but in laying aside the Commandments of God, and substituting them in the room.—Others were directly contrary both to the letter and spirit of the Divine Law, which says “Honour thy father and thy mother” (Exod. xx. 12) teaching and encouraging children to disobey and slight their parents, and even suffering them to wash when it was in their power, as well as their duty, to succour and relieve them.

*Fables*—The Apostle Peter, speaking of himself and the rest of his Brethren, declares—“we have not followed cunningly devised Fables”—we have

not walked according to them, as our rule; we did not *preach* our own, or other mens light and empty fancies; such as the idle and groundless stories among the Jews and Pagans, but the weighty, well-grounded, and important realities, which we had from Christ himself, being "eye-witnesses of his Majesty;" 2 Pet. i. 16.—The *character* of these *Fables* affords one reason why the Apostles did not follow them.—Observe, he calls them *cunningly devised Fables*—as such, they were the more apt to beguile unstabled souls and corrupt men "from the simplicity that is in Christ."—At this time both Jews and Gentiles, we find, had numerous *Fables* (some about God, some about the Messiah and his kingdom, and others about the creation, and promulgation of the Law) but we need not enter into particulars in this place, if we know enough of them, so as not to follow them; but in such a manner to avoid, that we may never be turned from the Word of God to them, then we are safe in this respect.

*Endless Genealogies*—or a list of ancestors. But since Christ is come, there is no necessity to give heed to *endless Genealogies* of descent.

*Profane and vain Babblings*—all empty noise about words and sentences, and customs disallowed by Christ, and not calculated for edification: Many of them were *profane* in the worst sense—as corruptions of the Word of God—and contrary to the Divine nature and perfections; though this does by no means militate against Preachers reading human authors, provided they make a good use of them; then, like the Apostles, they may quote them; but such as these here referred to justly deserve to be rejected and excluded from the Pulpit, as Gallio did the Jews from the Judgment-seat (Acts xviii. 16.) as foreign from our business, unworthy our notice, and only deserving contempt.

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*Philosophy*



*Philosophy and vain deceit*—or, in other words, what he styles in 1 Tim. vi. 20. “oppositions of science, falsely so called.”—The Apostle does not decry true, but *vain* Philosophy; that is, the vain fancies which the Heathens blended with the truth.—The sacred mysteries transcend, but never oppose *true* Philosophy; this is an useful servant to promote the Scripture knowledge; and, as some have observed, in the Books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, there is more *true* Philosophy, than in all the writings of the Heathens:—thus not the true knowledge of natural things, as founded upon reason, experience, and common sense, can possibly be meant, but “science, falsely so called;” nevertheless as the wisdom and understanding, all the reasoning powers of man, are inferior to the wisdom and understanding of God; so are all the improvements and discoveries in Philosophy to Divine Revelation—“As Heaven is high above the Earth,” so are God’s thoughts and God’s words above ours; Ps. ciii. 11. Is. lv. 9.

We now pass on to consider the reasons why Christ and his Apostles so expressly and earnestly warned Timothy and Titus (and in them all other Ministers) to shun and avoid them.

1st. Because of their unprofitableness—Those “fables, and endless genealogies (we are told) minister questions, rather than godly edifying” (1 Tim. i. 4.)—they are not religious, prudent, useful, nor innocent *questions* (2 Tim. ii. 23.)—they are *questions*, that have no connexion with sound wisdom, or solid learning; such as are foreign from the wisdom of God, or the Gospel of Christ.—Not only such *questions* as hinder, but such as do not in some view or other further useful knowledge, are to be avoided. It is not enough, that what we say be true, but it must be *useful* and *edifying*; and not idle, vain, empty, trifling, foolish, and impertinent. *Godly edifying* is the great end of *preaching*, as well as of every other

other Ordinance. (See 1 Cor. xiv.)—Ministers are to *preach*, so that their “profiting may appear to all” (1 Tim. iv. 15.) which is a sufficient reason to avoid every thing that hath not that tendency.—The traditions and commandments of men—philosophy and vain deceit—vain babblings—vain jangling—strife and vain glory—with every thing of a like nature—are altogether *unprofitable*, both for Ministers to *preach* and people to *bear* (Tit. iii. 9.) as well as many things that are frequently brought into the Pulpit, which not only divert the mind from its proper employment, but render all our worship, and all our religion, vain. Matt. xv. 9.

Their *pernicious consequences* not only do no good, but *much hurt*; they *gender strife*—not that holy and heavenly strife and contention which Paul and Jude exhort us to *maintain*—“the faith of the Gospel”—“the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Phil. i. 27. Jude 3.) but “vain jangling” (1 Tim. i. 6.) carnal strife “about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim. ii. 14.)—“questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings; perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds” (1 Tim. vi. 4, 5.)—But “the servant of the Lord must not strive (in this manner) but be gentle unto all men” (2 Tim. ii. 24.)—“the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James i. 20.) for though the meekness of Christ and the zeal of his heavenly Father’s house are by no means incompatible, yet sinful anger should be earnestly watched against, especially when the essentials of religion are contended for.

Another proof of the pernicious consequences of these things is—they “turn from the truth” (Tit. i. 14.) and this can never lead in the way to Heaven.—To “turn from the truth.”—The *truth* alone can make us *free* from all our spiritual enemies—take away truth, and there is no foundation

for faith, nor direction for practice.—“The truth of God”—“the truth of the Gospel”—“the truth as it is in Jesus”—should lie nearest our hearts, and be dearer to us than our lives: Hence the reason of that solemn warning given by the great Apostle to Timothy —“of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.”

Lastly.—To close this part of our Subject—the same Apostle gives Timothy a most awful reason for his command to “shun profane and vain babblings; for they will encrease unto more ungodliness;” 2 Tim. ii. 16. As Solomon declares, “the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with;” Prov. xvii. 14. “Before it be meddled with” (*i.e.* have nothing to do with it)—“and their word will eat as doth a canker;” 2 Tim. ii. 17. In a word, whatever else is contrary to *sound doctrine* and Christian practice is *condemned*. Hear, my soul, and tremble at the case of Nadab and Abihu, in offering “strange fire before the Lord” (Lev. x. 1,) and flee as Lot from Sodom—“stay *not* in all the plain,” flee for thy life, for thy soul, from all *damnable heresies*, “lest thou be consumed.”—But it is time to speak to the second part of the important question—What it is to keep them entire?

Secondly. This lies in declaring “all the counsel of God;” like the blessed Apostle, to keep “back nothing that is profitable” unto the Church of Christ.—By the word *counsel* here may be understood God’s mind and will, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, which may with the utmost propriety be called *his counsel*, because they are the effects of infinite wisdom, love, and grace; and Christ, the wonderful Counsellor, is the author, subject, and *all in all* in it. This speaks not only the perfect deliberation, and

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great importance of it, but seems designed to impress our souls with the devout sentiment and affection of the inspired penman—"my heart standeth in awe of thy word."—"All the counsel of God." Agreeable to this, we find, that "there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel;" Josh. viii. 35. And hence we read, in another place—"Thus saith the Lord; stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word;" Jer. xxvi. 2. And we are informed, that the Prophet was not disobedient to the Divine command; but declares—"I will keep nothing back from you;" Jer. xlii. 4. In like manner we find the Apostle Paul solemnly appealing to his hearers—"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God;" Acts xx. 27.—The histories—prophecies—types—figures—and parables—the awful prohibitions—the tremendous threatenings—the weighty precepts—the "exceeding great and precious promises"—blessings and privileges of the covenant—in a word, the all-important doctrines and duties—every thing that God himself declares in Scripture necessary to be known, believed, and practised, in order to salvation.

*All the Doctrines.*—The Apostles were commanded to "speak to the people all the words of this life" (Acts v. 20.) *i. e.* the spiritual and eternal life of precious and immortal souls. Here we are got into a most capacious, fruitful, pleasant, and heavenly field. Here is work enough for all the Ministers of Jesus till time shall be no longer—*All the Doctrines*—it would be going beyond our design, in this Discourse, even to mention every point or article of religion, that God hath revealed in the Old and New Testament.—It is the great concern of every Christian,

tian, but more especially of all the Ministers of Christ to form a system of Divinity from the Word of God for themselves; as we earnestly desire on the one hand not to go beyond, so on the other not to contract the heavenly bounds of Divine Revelation.

If we duly search the Oracles of God, we shall there find, that the Holy Ghost hath been very express and particular in laying down the *Subject-matter of Preaching*, in different parts of the Old, and especially the New Testament; where the important point is held forth to us in various lights, by different names, expressive of the same thing, or some thing pertaining thereto; some of these names more immediately lead our thoughts to its adorable *Author*. See John iii. 34.—Rom. i. 16.—Matt. xiii. 11.—Mark iv. 11. Acts xxviii. 31.—Other parts of the Divine Word not only speak the Divine *Author*, but particularly point out the *likeness* they bear to himself, together with their wonderful depth, and transcendent excellency, which hath been already largely spoken to. See 1 Cor. ii. 7. Acts xx. 24. Rom. i. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Eph. iii. 8. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.—Other Scriptures not only fix our attention upon the Divine Author, by their depth and excellency, but the suitableness to the different cases of fallen man, and the wonderful effects, which, by a Divine Blessing, they have upon the hearts and lives of all who believe and obey them. See Rom. vi. 17, 18. 2 Tim. i. 12. 1 Tim. iv. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 3. Jude 3. Matt. xxviii. 20.—Other portions of the sacred Oracles speak the fulness and variety; and others express the different parts of the *Subject-matter of Preaching*.

*All the Duties*.—We should not keep back or shun to declare any of the *Duties* of religion—there are not only *Doctrines* to be believed, but *Duties* to be practised—*Duties* to God, our neighbour, and ourselves—*Duties* in the world, and in the Church—in our callings—in our families—in our closets—all

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which should be taught and enforced from Gospel principles, Gospel motives, and to Gospel purposes; faith and practice must go together: In reality the latter is one great end and design of the former.—Ministers must *teach* the people “to observe all things whatsoever Christ *hath* commanded them” (Matt. xxviii. 20.)—to *walk* so as to please God, and profit our neighbour as well as ourselves—to *walk*, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, “in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke i. 6.) for as all *works* without faith are *dead*, so all faith without such works as flow from a principle of love to God and our neighbour is *dead* also; James ii. 26.—“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven;” Matt. vii. 21.—We must “let *our* light so shine before men, that they may see *our* good works, and glorify *our* Father which is in Heaven;” Matt. v. 16.—“Christ *not only* suffered for us, *but* left us an example that *we* should *not only* admire, *but* follow his steps;” 1 Pet. ii. 21.—This is the only appointed way to get the most comfortable experience of the reality of religion—“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;” John xiii. 17.—“If any man (says the Great Mediator, speaking of his heavenly Father) will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;” John vii. 17.—This naturally leads us to shew, that we should not only *preach the truth, as it is in Jesus*, in a practical way and manner, and the duties he hath commanded, from evangelical principles, but that our *Preaching* should also be *experimental*.

By *experimental Preaching* is not to be understood any thing separate from the theory and practice of Christianity (and yet something distinct from the belief of truth and the *practice* of duty, or from the proof and trial of our state) but chiefly the *fruits* and



and effects of faith and practice; the influence of both upon the heart of a believer; or, in other words, the gracious effect of the Spirit's application of Divine Truth.—It may be called *experimental*, because it is apprehended, that there appears in the sacred Scriptures to be a propriety in the phrase.—True spiritual experience may be said on God's part to come from the Holy Ghost; he is the moving cause and Agent in all—on our part by means of faith and practice: And this *experience* has a real influence upon, and excites to faith and practice.—By *believing*, we *experience* the influence of Divine Truth upon our hearts, and are excited to correspondent duty; so by *doing* the will of God, we grow more confirmed in an *experimental* knowledge of the truth and reality of religion, as well as our interest in its adorable Author; and all the blessings and privileges of the New Covenant.—By *experience* here is meant such, and only such, as is more or less common to every true Christian;—*more or less*, because as it is evident that some have more spiritual knowledge and true faith, so some have more *experience*—their spiritual senses are more exercised to discern, and more susceptible of spiritual and Divine things. What our Lord says of the Kingdom of Heaven may with equal propriety be said of spiritual *experience*—"The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof;" Matt. xiii. 31. This is agreeable to the representation of Christ in Mark iv. 28.—"first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear:"—Hence is found the distinction made by the beloved Disciple who lay in his bosom—*Children, young men, and fathers*. 1 John ii. 12, 13.—What the great Apostle Paul asserts of *one* of the graces of the Spirit may with propriety

propriety be said of *all*—"Patience (which proceeds from faith) *worketh* experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed;" Rom. v. 4, 5.—Thus by suffering the will of God in "the afflictions of the Gospel"—("the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ")—we *experience* his loving-kindness, and faithfulness towards us ("the power of Christ *resting* upon us" in our *weakness*) and the influence of his Spirit in us, whereby we "abound in hope," and are emboldened to look for future supplies of grace, until it is consummated in glory.—Yes; there is a real *experience* in this life, both of the terrors of the Law, and the comforts of the Gospel—"Knowing therefore (says Paul) the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;" 2 Cor. v. 11.—They not only knew from the Divine Word the *terrors* of "the judgement of the great day," which they had realized by faith; but they had really *experienced* the terrors of the Divine Law, by the Holy Spirit's setting home conviction upon their hearts—"The love of Christ constraineth us" (says the same Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 14.) It held and kept them fast to their duty, as soldiers under his banner, as the Captain of Salvation most powerfully animated them, as a mighty torrent that bears down all before it.

As no one can reasonably imagine, that mere notions and speculations, even of the best things, could ever enable the Apostles to do and suffer as they did, if they had not really "tasted that the Lord is gracious;" for it must be allowed, that when a Minister of Christ feels the *power* ("for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power;"—"in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;" 1 Cor. iv. 20. 1 Thess. i. 5.) of the truths which he delivers to others, by their effects upon himself; he is certainly then most likely to suit his Discourses to the various cases of his auditors, and to speak most to the purpose

pose concerning those things which he has spiritually "seen, heard, *known*, and *his* hands have handled, and *tasted* of the Word of Life;" and, through a Divine Blessing, do most good: Nevertheless he ought not to set up his own *experience* as a rule and standard for others: Though doubtless Ministers are countenanced, at proper seasons, as far as it may tend to the edification of the Church (like David, Ps. lxxvi. 16.) to speak their own *experience*; yet there is great cause for humility and thankfulness, as well as a godly jealousy, lest they should set up their *experience* as a rule for others, instead of the *experience* of Christians under the Old and New Testament, which are fixed by Christ and his Apostles.—In a word, they ought to bring faith, practice, *experience*—all "to the Law and to the Testimony," and teach according to their infallible decisions.

But Ministers had need to be well persuaded of the truth of what they deliver; they need more than others the "riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," to be able to say—"We believe, and are sure, that that Christ is the Son of the living God"—"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak."

Were we to enlarge upon this important subject, we should be naturally led to shew the following things—That the more a Minister knows of himself, especially the plague of his own heart, the less *ignorant* he is of the *devices* of Satan; the greater acquaintance he hath with the world in general, and the various cases and circumstances of his hearers in particular, respecting temptations, afflictions, and desertions; and above all, the more powerful influence the Word of Christ hath upon his own soul,

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the more *experimentally*, and, by the Grace of God, the more successfully he will be able to *preach*.

The whole of the Divine Oracles may very properly be divided into the two essential and principal parts; namely, the Law and the Gospel:—The former seems designed by the Author to prepare for the latter, as the Old Testament for the New. The Law teacheth all that God requireth of us in thought, word, and deed; and the Gospel all the blessings of Grace and Glory, which he freely bestows upon us both here and hereafter.—We have hitherto for the most part considered the Law and Gospel as united, or the Gospel taken in a large and general sense; we shall here consider them as distinguished from each other, and begin with

*The Divine Law.*—By the *Law* here is meant the *Moral Law*, which contains the “good, acceptable, and perfect will of God;” the whole of which, by an infallible Expositor, is summed up in one word—*Love*—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. xxii. 37—40.)—they all depend here; they all intend this; Love is all in them.—This *Law* was formed by the Divine and Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth, engraved by his own finger, and proclaimed, in the most awful and tremendous manner, by Jehovah himself, the Angel of the Covenant, from the burning mountain; Exod. xxxii. 16. xxxi. 18. xx. 1—18.—This *Law* we have all violated and transgressed; this *Law* finds the whole world *guilty* before God; Rom. iii. 19.—This “*Law* (like its adorable Author) is holy, just, and good” (Rom. vii. 12.) spiritual, glorious, unchangeable, and eternal; binding on every person, in all  
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ages, and under all dispensations.—A *Law*, which never was, never will, never can be altered, or abrogated, to all eternity.—This very *Law* (as well as what related to the undertaking of the glorious Mediator, in the Covenant of Grace) Christ ever had in his heart, and always kept pure, whole, and undefiled; John xv. 10. Heb. vii. 26.—This is the same *Law* which he came not “to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matt. v. 17.) by his obedience, even unto death, “to magnify, and make honourable;” Isa. xlii. 21.—This is the same *Law* which he so amply, wonderfully, and powerfully opened, especially in his most excellent and incomparable Sermon upon the Mount. (See Matt. v. vi. vii.)—This is the *Law* which all God’s Ministers must explain (Lev. x. 11. Mal. ii. 7.) not as a Covenant of Works; for “by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified;” Rom. iii. 20.—“If righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain;” Gal. ii. 21.—This *Law* must be *preached* in its full extent (Neh. viii. 3, 4, 7, 8.) for it “is exceeding broad” (Ps. cxix. 96.) nor must one of the least of the commandments be omitted; Matt. v. 19.—The design, the great *design* of the *Law* of God, and the opening of it, is to shew what man was, but is not; what man was before he fell; what we all ought to be and do; and what we are not, nor, since the Fall, can possibly attain by any power of the creature in and by themselves—to convince of sin—“to bring us to Christ”—to enhance his compleat and everlasting Righteousness in our esteem—to excite joy and gratitude for his standing in our Law-place, room and stead—to keep us humble all our days—to be the constant rule of our life, and (as considered in Christ) the *mark* towards which we must *press*, till we arrive safe to Immanuel’s Land, where nothing shall ever enter that *defileth*, or maketh unclean; Rev. xxi. 27.

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The Gospel.—By the Gospel here, as distinguished from the Law, is meant the “good news from a far country”—those “glad tidings of good things”—that *joyful sound* of life and salvation, which it contains, and in the Ministry is proclaimed to sinful, guilty creatures, condemned by the Law; “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” freely bestowed upon “the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;” Acts xx. 28. —It is not here intended to enlarge upon its Divine Author—wonderful nature, and glorious design; we only now consider it as the Gospel of Christ—Christ is the Author; Christ is the Sum, as Mediator (“the Body is Christ;” Col. ii. 17.)—Christ is the Subject; and, as the Angel of the Covenant, the gracious and glorious Publisher of it. —The “great Salvation began to be *first* spoken by the Lord” (Heb. ii. 3.) to Adam and Eve in Paradise (Gen. iii. 15.)—to Abraham; Gen. xii. 1—3.—The whole of the Apostle’s *preaching* was “the kingdom of God, and the things which concern the Lord Jesus;” Acts xxviii. 31.—“The *great* mystery of godliness;” 1 Tim. iii. 16.—“The sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow;” 1 Pet. i. 11.—In a word, “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. iii. 8.) in his Conception, Incarnation, Life, Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession — the whole of his important Offices, wonderful Characters, and most endearing Relations.—The unspeakable blessings, which flow from him, as the Fountain of Life—“Repentance and Remission of sins in his Name among all nations” (Luke xxiv. 47. Acts v. 31.)—Justification (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)—“Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts xx. 21.)—“They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts v. 42.)—“Christ Jesus the Lord”—“and him crucified” (2 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Cor.



1 Cor. i. 23. ii. 2.) Repentance and Conversion ;  
Acts iii. 19. x. 42, 43.

If we *preach* "as the Oracles of God," we must dwell chiefly upon the *most important* matters both of the *Law* and *Gospel*;—what these are, we may easily perceive; we are not left in the dark concerning essentials and fundamentals. That there are some things of *greater* importance than others is clear and manifest, from the awful charge which Christ himself brings against the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees; we are told, that they "omitted the weightier matters of the law;" Matt. xxiii. 23. for though *all* the things, both of *Law* and *Gospel* are *weighty*, yet there are *some* of *more* weight than others—such as "judgment, mercy, and faith."—But what are *most weighty*? The answer is—all those things which are revealed in the Divine Word—whatever Christ, his Apostles and Prophets have laid the greatest injunction upon, and published in the most express and awful manner, those things, we may be fully assured, are *most weighty*; especially where salvation is promised, or damnation threatened; these things we may be certain are of infinite importance. It is not meant, that every word of God is not essential to some purpose or other, even in salvation; but whatever shuts men out of Heaven, or shuts them up in Hell—whatever delivers them from Hell, and fits them for Heaven, must undoubtedly enter into the very heart, life, and spirit of all religion and Christianity: For instance, Christ himself as the foundation: "There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved"—"neither is there salvation in any other;" Acts iv. 12. Hence the Apostle stiles the "denying the Lord that bought them"—*damnable heresies*; 2 Pet. ii. 1: Regeneration, Conversion, Repentance, Faith, Love, and Holiness.—If the Sacred Pages are carefully perused, it will clearly appear, that everlasting life, or everlasting death, depends upon

upon the being, or not being, partakers of these blessings—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" John iii. 3.—"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;" Matt. xviii. 3.

The above are evidently some of the most important subjects in Christianity, without which there is no religion in the world; and every thing essential, whether in faith, practice, or experience, is comprehended in them. It is not said, that these are all that are *fundamental*; but it is maintained, that *every one of them is fundamental*.

To conclude. We cannot "speak as the Oracles of God" in general, nor declare *all* his counsel, nor do justice to any one part thereof, whether it more expressly refers to faith or practice, unless we make Christ *all* in our *preaching*. Every branch of Christianity hath some reference or other to Christ; nor can we be said to *preach* Christ, while we omit any part of his Law or Gospel. He is the *sum and substance* of the whole Bible—The "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Rev. xxii. 13.) and consequently should be *all in all* in our Ministry.—Hence Paul "determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" 1 Cor. ii. 1.—Here our eyes, here our hearts, should all be fixed: The whole of our *preaching*—all that we say, should centre in him.—The shortest epitome of the whole Bible is this one word—CHRIST.

It may not be improper in this place to relate a few of the principal articles, which are commonly believed and treated of among us—For instance—Would we treat of the Being and Perfections of God, in his wonderful, adorable Person, as Mediator?—"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" Ps. lxxxv. 10.—"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;"—

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Col. ii. 9.—Would we treat of the Works of God  
 Creation?—"All things were made by him; and  
 without him was not any thing made that was made;  
 John i. 3.—Would we treat of man in a state of  
 innocence?—"The second Adam, the Lord from  
 Heaven," was the Creator, as well as Redeemer, of  
 the first—"Let us make man in our image, after our  
 likeness: So God created man in his own image, in  
 the image of God created he him;" Gen. i. 26, 27.—  
 Would we treat of Divine Providence?—"In him we  
 live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28).—  
 He *supports* and *upholds* "all things by the word of his  
 Power" (Heb. i. 3.) "and doeth according to his  
 will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhab-  
 itants of the Earth;" Dan. iv. 35.—Would we treat  
 of the Covenant of Grace?—Christ is the Head,  
 the Mediator, the Surety, the Testator, the Angel  
 of the Covenant—he is the *Covenant* itself; Eph.  
 22. Col. i. 18. Heb. xii. 24.—viii. 6.—vii. 22.  
 —ix. 15, 16. Mal. iii. 1. If. xlii. 6.—Would we  
 treat of the Law of God?—It is Christ, and only  
 Christ, whose Law it is, as one with the Father, who  
 in the office of Mediator, hath satisfied its demands  
 —*magnified* and made it *honourable*; Rom. x.  
 Gal. vi. 2. John x. 30. Matt. v. 17. If. xlii. 21.—  
 Would we treat of the ruin of mankind by the Fall  
 —He, and he alone can recover and *save* lost and  
 ruined souls; Heb. vii. 25. Matt. xviii. 11.—  
 Would we treat of any or all *spiritual Blessings* of the  
 Covenant of Grace?—They are all *in* Christ  
 Eph. i. 3.—Are we led to treat of Death—Judg-  
 ment—Heaven—Hell—Immortality—and Eternal  
 Life?—No Victory over Death—no happy Immo-  
 rtality—no Resurrection to Eternal Life—no Delive-  
 rance from the wrath to come—no Admission into the  
 everlasting Kingdom, without Christ; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22,  
 54, 55, 57. 1 Thess. i. 10. John xiv. 6. Rom. vi.  
 23.—Would we treat of practical and experimental  
 Religion



Religion in any or all its parts ? There never was—there is not—there never will be any obtained without Christ ; John xv. 5.

Thus it appears, that if we “ speak as the Oracles of God,” we must make Christ *all* in our Ministry.

The *Subject-Matter* of the Gospel Ministry might be farther opened by the Names given to the Persons who are called to preach.—Are they called God's Mouth ? They must preach his Word ; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.—Are they servants of the Most High God ? They must *show* unto their hearers “ the way of salvation ;” Acts xvi. 17.—Are they soldiers of Christ ? They must “ war a good warfare” ( 1 Tim. i. 18.) and, like the Captain of their salvation (Matt. iv. 7, 10.) *use* the *two-edged* sword of the Spirit ; Eph. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12.—Are they witnesses ? They must “ testify the Gospel of the Grace of God ;” Acts xx. 24.—Are they ambassadors ? They must “ pray *the people* in Christ's stead *to* be reconciled to God”—and preach *the Word* and “ Ministry of reconciliation ;” 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.—Are they stewards and interpreters ? They must unfold and dispense the mysteries “ of the manifold Grace of God ;” 1 Pet. iv. 10.—Are they scribes and householders ? They must bring “ out of *their treasures* things new and old ;” Matt. xiii. 52.—Are they pastors ? They must “ feed the flock ;” 1 Pet. v. 2.—Are they nurses ? They must nourish the children of God with “ the sincere milk of the Word ;” 1 Cor. iii. 2.—Are they builders ? They must lay Christ for a foundation, and “ take heed how *they* build thereon ;” 1 Cor. iii. 10.—Are they Ministers ? They must *preach* the Gospel of the Kingdom ; Luke ix. 60.—Are they the salt of the earth ? They must spread the *savour* of the *knowledge* of Christ in the whole of their Ministry ; 2 Cor. ii. 14.—Are they sons of consolation ? They must *comfort* the *mourners in Zion* ; Isaiah xl. 1.—

Are they sons of thunder? They must, like the great Apostle, preach "the terror of the Lord to persuade men;" 2 Cor. v. 11.

An enlargement in this place would take up too much room; for on searching the Sacred Scriptures, near fifty different names are found ascribed to the Ministers of the Gospel: But it might be observed, that the preceding loses some of its weight, because only applied to the *Subject-Matter of Preaching*; whereas the various Appellations are expressive for the most part of the nature of the whole *Work*.

Having finished what was proposed concerning the *Subject-Matter of the Gospel Ministry*, we are naturally led, agreeable to the Plan laid down, to enquire into the best Method of handling the *several Parts of a Sermon*; but this is intended, if the Lord permit, more particularly to be considered in our next Discourse.

## C H A P. VII.

ON THE METHOD OF TREATING THE SEVERAL PARTS  
OF PREACHING.

*The Introduction of our Discourse.---The Exposition and Interpretation of the Text.---The Proposition, Confirmation and Illustration of the Doctrines contained in and derived from it; and the right Use, Improvement, and Application of the Whole, agreeable to the peculiar Nature of our Subject, and the various Circumstances of our Hearers :---Whether for their Improvement in any Branch of spiritual Knowledge, or Christian Practice---or to assist in the Trial and Discovery of the real State and Condition of their Souls---to reprove for Sin---warn of Danger---comfort in Affliction---direct to the proper Means of Safety, and exhort to the right Discharge of all Duty, in the Exercise of every Grace, in the Way to Heaven and Glory.*

**A**FTER the Almighty had brought a world from nothing into existence, the inspired Historian informs us, that "the earth was without form, and void," and darkness was upon the face of the deep;" Gen. iii. 3. All the materials were made, although they were yet confused and blended together in one undistinguished mass: But are they to continue in such a situation? No; this would never answer the important end of that wonderful idea formed in the Divine Mind, in order to accommodate the intended blessed inhabitants. We read of five days being taken up in the disposition of the matter. Hence we may learn the necessity of *deliberation* in the performance of all great affairs—how to proceed in matters of the last importance. The utility, the beauty, the excellency of the creation could never have appeared, unless it had been properly



perly disposed. Accordingly we find, that God *made* "the light, and divided the light from the darkness;" and by this means distinguished day and night from one another—"The waters which were under the Firmament (*i. e.* in the sea) from the waters which were above the Firmament," in the air; Gen. i. 3, 4, 5, 7.—In a word, he disposed and ordered every thing in the best way and method, perfectly agreeable to the vast designs of his Wisdom, Goodness, and Power; Jer. x. 12.—May not a Minister of Christ, from this conduct of the blessed God, learn something of the greatest importance on the Method of Preaching?—The materials of his Discourse already exist, and are nigh him, in the Holy Scriptures (as hath been largely shewn) but he must collect them together, select the various parts, give them all their due place and value, divide and distinguish things that differ, and connect and unite things that agree, if he means to avoid *confusion*, and would help the understanding and memory of his hearers. It is his duty to shew the mutual dependence of one part of God's Word upon another, of one article of faith upon another, of one branch of practice upon another, and of one part of his Discourse upon another. Were our sentiments to be given in a few words upon *method*, it would be this—to imitate the All-wise God himself in his wonderful process, advancing by degrees from things that are less to things that are more perfect, until he comes to the close of his Discourse, where the grand design of the whole is fully unfolded.

By *method* here is understood both the Composition and Disposition of the several parts of our Discourse, in such a way and manner as, through a Divine Blessing, may be most adapted to the nature and design of the Subject, and the Circumstances of the Hearers. All the rules of *method* have been, or ought

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to be formed and followed for this purpose, and not the Subject for the sake of any *method* whatever. "Let all things (says the Great Apostle, when speaking of Divine Worship) be done decently, and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) consequently Preaching in all its parts; agreeable to the example of Solomon and Paul, who not only *sought out*, but *set in order* what ought to be *preached*, in an orderly way and manner; Eccles. xii. 9, 10. 1 Cor. xi. 34.

Besides the common directions of Logicians and Rhetoricians upon this head, we would take particular notice of the following humbling truth, found by long experience, which should ever be attended to. —The good *order* of a Sermon is very often much affected, either in the plan or the execution, if not both, by the disposition of the heart. If our *hearts* are not only like David's "inditing a good matter" (Psalm xlv. 1.) but the Spirit of Christ (as he hath graciously promised his Disciples; John xiv. 26.) *teaches* us "all things, and brings all things to *our remembrance*" (for the *disposings* or "preparations of the heart *are* from the Lord;" Prov. xvi. 1.) then our work goes on safely, comfortably, and profitably; —on the contrary, where the mind is indisposed, it is likely, whatever skill there is in *method* and *disposition*, that our Discourse will partake of it, and be more or less disordered.

As to the several Parts of *Preaching*, these may be learned from the various *Names* given to the Ministers of Christ in the Divine Word. —But as it is intended here to take a particular view of each *branch* of the *Gospel Ministry*, we shall also subjoin what the Holy Scriptures expressly declare upon this head.

*All* the essential parts of *Preaching* are often comprehended, by the inspired Writers, in *one* of its parts; at other times, we find, the Ministry of the

the Word divided into several branches.—We shall give a few instances.

1st. *One of its parts*, as *teaching* (Matt. v. 1.) *giving the sense* (Neh. viii. 8.) or *opening and expounding* the Scripture; Luke xxiv. 27, 32. Hence the propriety of Ministers being called “the Light of the World,” Teachers, Scribes, and Interpreters.—Sometimes the whole of Christ’s Discourse is called *Doctrine*, as his Sermon upon the Mount, in the Ship, and in the Temple; Matt. vii. 28. Mark iv. 1, 2. xii. 35, 38. Sometimes *Preaching* is stiled *Proving, Reasoning, Disputing, Persuading, Testifying*; Acts ix. 20, 22. xxiv. 24, 25. xvii. 17. xix. 8. xx. 20, 21, 24. Agreeable to this, the Gospel itself is called “the Testimony of God” (1 Cor. ii. 1.) and the Ministers of Christ are stiled *Witnesses* and *Soldiers*; Heb. xii. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 3. And the Gospel of Christ is likewise called *Warning, Admonition, Exhortation*; Acts xx. 31. 1 Theff. v. 12. Acts xiii. 15. Luke iii. 18. 1 Theff. ii. 2, 3. But,

2dly. The Ministry of the Word is at other times divided into several branches. Sometimes into two; as *Teaching* and *Exhortation*; Rom. xii. 7, 8. *Opening* and *Alledging*; Acts xvii. 2, 3. *Warning* and *Teaching*; Col. i. 28. *Disputing* and *Persuading*; Acts xix. 8. *Reasoning* and *Persuading*; Acts xviii. 4. Sometimes into three, as *Expounding, Testifying, and Persuading*; Acts xxviii. 23. *Reasoning, Opening, and Alledging*; Acts xvii. 2, 3. *Reproving, Rebuking, and Exhorting*; 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3. and sometimes into four parts, as *Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, and Instruction*; 2 Tim. iii. 16.

These are the several Parts of the *Gospel Ministry* drawn from the precepts and examples of all the inspired Writers and Preachers, which are recommended to us in the Old and New Testament, and followed



followed more or less closely by all the best Ministers in every Age of the World.

Were one of the shortest divisions of the *Gospel Ministry* to be fixed upon, it might be that of the Apostle in Rom. xii. 7, 8. *Teaching* and *Exhortation*. As the whole of Religion or Christianity is divided into doctrine and duty, knowledge and practice, or faith and obedience; so the whole of *Preaching* may be fully comprehended in *Teaching* and *Exhortation*; the former of these, as distinguished from the latter, although it hath to do with the heart in general, is particularly concerned with, and addressed to the reason, judgment, and understanding of the Congregation, in proposing, opening, proving, and defending the Doctrines of the Gospel—"the truth as it is in Jesus," which is necessary to be known, believed, and obeyed, in order to salvation (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.)—the latter of these (*i. e.*) *Exhortation*, although concerned both with the heart and life in general, yet is especially interested with the will and affections, and includes (besides what chiefly relates to the *doctrine*, which, as we have before observed, is more immediately directed to the understanding and judgment) reproof, warning, comfort, counsel, and direction, with all the motives and means, by which mankind are stirred up and excited to the love and practice of every branch of holiness, in order to the compleat enjoyment of everlasting happiness.—The first of these prepares for the last, and sets the soul in order, as an excellent watch or clock, finished in the highest perfection, but not wound up.—The last winds it up, and sets all the springs and wheels in motion, by which mean, the chief design is effectually carried into execution.

A Sermon formed upon this Divine plan, where the Word of Truth is *rightly divided*; a just difference made between the *holy* and *unholy*, the *clean* and the *unclean*;

*unclean*; a proper distinction between the *precious* and the *vile*; the *righteous* and the *wicked*; "him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not;" or to speak agreeable to the phraseology of the New Testament, where *sinners* and *saints*, *believers* and *unbelievers*, are treated according to their true and distinguished characters, certainly is most likely to meet with the Blessing of Heaven.—In a word, this Method is most likely to answer the all-important end of our Ministry, to *save* ourselves, and those that *bear* us; 1 Tim. iv. 16. Which of these parts is to have the chief room in every Discourse is best determined by the nature of the Subject, and the Circumstances of the Congregation. For instance—Is the Text "hard to be understood," or are the people in general ignorant of it? Here we must give the true sense of the passage. Are our Hearers in doubt and uncertainty about the truth of the Doctrine we derive from it? We are then to produce full, clear, and evident proofs for their conviction.—Is the truth as it is in Jesus opposed? The Minister of Christ is "set for the defence of the Gospel;" Phil. i. 17.

With respect to what is commonly called the *Application* of a *Sermon*.—Are the Hearers unconverted, or "at ease in Zion?" The Preacher must "shew *them* their transgressions," and "cause them to know *their* abominations;" Isaiah lviii. 1. Ezek. xx. 4.—Are they in danger of living and dying in their sins? Here he must be a Boanerges (a son of thunder) he must "blow the trumpet, and warn the people;" Ezek. xxxiii. 3—8. The greatest Minister of Christ, who ever lived under the Spirit of *Inspiration* here below, solemnly declares the absolute necessity and importance of this part of the Gospel Ministry—"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord (saith the inspired Penman) we persuade men."

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"The *terrors* of the Lord" are as necessary to warn us "to flee from the wrath to come," as "the love of Christ *is to constrain* us;" 2 Cor. v. 11, 14.—Are they in affliction? He must be a Barnabas, a son of consolation; he must *comfort* the people of God, *comfort* all that mourn in Zion; Isaiah xl. 1, 2.—Are his hearers slothful in their heavenly business? He must exhort to the diligent discharge of all duty, and the fervent exercise of every gift and grace.—Are they ignorant of what to do for relief and safety? He must direct and counsel to the use of all Divinely appointed Means.

The great concern of every Minister of Jesus Christ is—in what manner to treat these several parts of his office in the most acceptable and edifying *method*. This is the grand question; and the answer to it is our principal design in the following Chapter.—Accordingly we shall proceed, agreeable to the Plan laid down, and shall here begin with,

I. The Introduction.—By an Introduction here is not merely meant the simple beginning of a Discourse (although the more simplicity the better in this, as well as in every other part of the Gospel Ministry) but the chief design thereof is to prepare the way for a due and becoming reception of the Subject.—In order to the accomplishment of this, "wisdom is profitable to direct" to the use of the best means.—This heavenly disposition will lead its possessors to the consideration and removal of all those stumbling blocks which may at any time lie in the way, and are likely to obstruct and hinder its access to the ears and hearts of the Congregation. Sometimes Ministers may have little, or no considerable obstacles of this kind to encounter; the minds of their Auditories may not be prepossessed against either the Subject or the Preacher; but, like Cornelius, his kinsmen, and near friends, already prepared; the

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language of their hearts may be—"Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;" Acts x. 33.

At other times the Hearers may have, in some former Discourse, been apprised of the Subject; or else the shortness of the time may render it proper and necessary to begin with a brief *transition*, only just to glance backwards upon the Subject, or part of the Subject, which may have been already discussed, and forwards to what may be intended further to consider; or to make a few pertinent Remarks upon the Context, as it stands in connexion with the Text; or else directly to enter upon the Words; for sometimes the Text itself is properly an *Introduction*; as for instance—"O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord;" Jer. xxii. 29. "Men, Brethren, and Fathers, hearken;" Acts vii. 2. "Ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious; for as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you;" Acts xvii. 22, 23.—But all these things depend upon circumstances.

At other times, a Minister should act as a Pioneer, whose business lies in opening the passages for an army to march with more success, order and expedition, to the field of battle. In like manner, the good Soldier of Christ, the Spiritual Pioneer (if we may be permitted to stile him such) is under the necessity of removing, as far as lies in his power, all the obstructions which might otherwise hinder his access (as was before observed) not only to the Ears, but Hearts of his Audience. The principal concern of every Minister of Christ, in this respect, is to gain the attention, conciliate the affections, and present to his Hearers a view of the whole design of his Discourses.

courses; but as the two former of these, however needful in the *Introduction*, are not peculiar to it, but essential to every part of *Preaching*, in order to edify the Hearers, we shall only just drop a few words upon each. Job informs us of "men giving ear, and *keeping* silence at *his* counsel;" Job xxix.

21. What his counsel was is not particularly recorded, but doubtless it was of such a nature, and given in such a graceful and becoming manner, as worthily gained the Ears of his People; when he spake, silence and attention became the Auditory: But however excellent and important Job's counsel was, we are well persuaded it could not transcend the Great and Wonderful Things contained in the Gospel of Christ; *Things*, which "Angels *themselves* desire to look into;" 1 Pet. i. 12. And if it is the peoples duty to *bear* the same, "not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God;" it certainly becomes the Preacher to gain the attention of his Audience.

Sometimes the Minister of Christ is obliged (agreeably to the practice of the Apostles and Prophets) to *beg* and *entreat*—at other times, by the weight and importance of the things he speaks (not only in themselves, but to the spiritual and eternal advantage of his Hearers) he is enabled successfully to *demand* attention. In order to this, there might be urged the necessity of understanding and practising the innocent and holy art of the Great, Divinely Courteous, and Eloquent Apostle, contained in the following assertion (wherein he sets an example to all the Ministers of Christ, in every age of the world)—"I please all men in all things (for their good to edification) not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved;" 1 Cor. x. 33. By *these* means it is most likely to *conciliate* the *affections* of the Hearers; but there is one thing in particular, which

we would wish to observe on this head ; namely, Although it is our indispensable duty to be “ faithful *even* unto death, *if ever we hope to receive* a Crown of Life ;” yet we ought not to deny any praise that is due to our Hearers ; nay, faithfulness itself obliges us (as far as we can consistently with truth and propriety) to *commend* our Hearers. We do not mean to flatter or enkindle pride ; we *only* mean what the Apostle meant—to encourage them to *abound* in every good Thought, Word, and *Work* : Were it necessary we might produce *many* instances of this kind from the Holy Scriptures.

Should we at any time be obliged or compelled to speak of ourselves, it becomes us to be exceedingly cautious, agreeably to the simplicity that is in Christ, to speak in a modest and humble manner.

Our great concern, in *conciliating* the *affections* of our Hearers, should be the *furtherance* of the Gospel, in their edification and salvation ; that when we can Preach, or they Hear us no longer (having, by the Grace of God, found an effectual access to their hearts) they may have an abundant *entrance* “ into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The last, and indeed the chief thing peculiar to an *Introduction*, is to present a View of the Method and Design of our Subject :—We have a perfect example of this in Luke’s Preface to his Gospel ; Chap. i. 1—4.—The Minister of Christ, who is concerned for the success of his Discourse, and as a part of it is desirous to *introduce* it in a proper way and manner, will duly consider its nature, and, according to his abilities, the persons whom he addresses ; as far as he is under the influence of Divine Wisdom, he will be careful to avoid whatever is foreign, or draws aside *from*, and as careful to observe whatever leads on, *to* his Subject. He will proportion his *Intro-*  
*duction*



*duction* to his Discourse, his time, and the circumstances of his Auditory.—In a word, without dwelling upon the beauties or blemishes of an *Introduction*, we would here observe, that those are always the Best which are most consistent with the Subject under consideration, and least suitable to any other Discourse whatever. This shews, that although an *Introduction* is the first part of a Sermon, yet it is the last thing which should be studied, if it is studied at all. It is not meant by this to encourage indolence; but when an able Minister of Jesus Christ, by reading, meditation, and prayer, understands and feels the nature and importance of his Subject, he will not then be much at a loss, either in the Closet or Pulpit, for a proper and becoming *Introduction*.

As to the *method* in general, it seems best to proceed gradually; but with respect to the Spirit, Language, and Delivery, the most becoming is the mild and sublime.—This naturally leads us to a more important part of the Gospel Ministry, which is,

II. The *Exposition* and *Interpretation* of the Sacred Text.—Every Congregation, at one time or another, more or less, stands in need of this. All mankind are by nature ignorant of Spiritual and Divine Things; and those who have the greatest measure of knowledge want more.—The very word *Exposition* supposes some difficulty in the Subject, or ignorance in the Hearers, if not both; for where there is neither of these things, there can be no necessity of *explaining* what is already open and manifest: Nevertheless, should there be but one soul in our Assembly ignorant of the meaning of our Text, this part of *Preaching* must be of use and importance. The more ignorant our Hearers are, the more necessity there is for us to *make* the Vision *plain*—"that he may run that readeth it"—that "wayfaring men, though fools, *may* not err therein;" especially where  
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there is any difficulty in the Text itself, which may often be the case ; for though " God is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all," and his Word " a Light that shineth in a dark place"—though all things which are necessary to be known, believed, and obeyed, in order to Salvation, are to be found in plain Scriptures adapted to the weakest understanding, yet there " are some things hard to be understood," sufficient to employ all the faculties of the wisest, holiest, and best of men, and keep them humble *for ever*.

But however difficult the Scriptures may be in particular places, we are not to imagine that they are useless, or like the barren mountain ; no, they resemble a fruitful field, the garden of Eden, or the bowels of the earth, which contain " all manner of precious stones."—The knowledge of them will richly reward all the labours of the most diligent and active Students, who seek as for *hid treasures*.—The *Pearl of great Price* is infinitely more than adequate to all the care and industry bestowed in searching for it : Yes ; there is enough to enrich the generations yet unborn, till time itself shall be no longer : From which, we may safely infer both the propriety and necessity of a close attention to the precepts, and following the example of Christ, his Apostles and Prophets. All that was said in our Lord's most excellent and heavenly Sermon upon the Mount, and the sum of that affecting and wonderful conversation which he had with his two Disciples, when they uttered the following pathetic expression—" Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures ?" may be justly called *Teaching, Expounding, and Opening the Scriptures*. (See Matt. v. vi. vii. Luke xxiv. 27, 32, 44—47.)—Agreeably to this, we are told, in Neh. viii. 8. that Ezra and the Levites " read in the Book, in the Law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense:"

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And we also find, in Acts xi. 4. xxviii. 23, 28. the two great Apostles, Peter and Paul, followed the same example. And one great command of Christ, to every individual who peruseth the Scriptures, is, "Let him that readeth, understand" (Mark vii. 14.) consistent with the most important question, which he put to his Disciples, and may with propriety be put to all his Ministers—"Have you understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) or that of Philip to the Eunuch—"Understandest thou what thou readest?" Acts viii. 30.

As knowledge lies at the foundation of practice, we wish to be infinitely cautious of every thing we advance on this Head, and to observe such, and only such Rules, as have their basis in the soundest reason, and are fairly derived from Divine Revelation.—*Such* Rules, as the wisest, holiest, and best of men, in all ages of the world, have most conscientiously followed. *All* the Rules for understanding the Scripture are contained in the same. The Spirit of God informs us in his Word, what means are to be made use of, in order to understand it.—The means are,

First. Common to *all* the Church of Christ. It is the *duty* of *all*, according to the nature of the business, and the best of their ability, to "search the Scriptures;" it is the *duty* of *all* to meditate upon their Sacred Contents; it is the *duty* of *all* to pray for the special influence of the Divine Spirit; and it is the *duty* of *all* to be found in the practice of whatever God hath *commanded* in his Word; but especially the *duty* of the *Ministers* of Christ.—(This hath been already considered in Chap. IV. Page 183.)

Secondly. To be more particular, we shall fix upon some of the most important things which are to be regarded by the Ministers of Christ—such as the One Grand and All-important Rule, which the Holy Ghost hath given for the instruction of the Ministers



Ministers of Christ, in all ages of the world—a *Rule*, which can never be too well understood, too much insisted upon, nor too closely followed; which the inspired Penman, in Rom. xii. 6. calls “the proportion (or rather *analogy*) of faith;” by which phrase is understood all those doctrines and duties which are clearly expressed in the Holy Scriptures, are perfectly consistent with each other, and bear an exact proportion to the whole.—And, in order to understand and fulfil this *Rule*, we are furnished by the examples of the Apostles of Christ, with an infallible method—“comparing spiritual things with spiritual;” 1 Cor. ii. 13. not only suiting our language to the Subject, which may probably be here implied, but *comparing* one part of God’s Word with another.

We may rest assured, that the Holy Ghost is the only infallible interpreter of his own mind and will, and what he declares in one part cannot possibly contradict another; we mean, where he is speaking upon the Subject, making proper allowance for the different times, places, persons, and other circumstances; for sometimes the same words are used, when it is evident the same things are not intended: For example, we might produce the inferences which the two Apostles, Paul and James, drew from the Subjects they treated of; the *former* says —“We conclude, that a man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law:” Here it is clear and evident from the place, as well as the nature of both Law and Gospel, that he means Justification in the sight of God; and that he had a view to Christ, in whom *alone*, God hath declared himself *well-pleased* with any of the guilty and condemned race of Adam, “for his Righteousness sake,” which can *only* be received by *faith*; yet, at the same time, *this* faith is never *alone* (for then it would be *dead*, as James declares)

declares) but is always attended with *good works*, although none of them can *justify* our persons in the sight of God ;—and indeed there is an humbling reason for it, because at best they are not good enough, they are imperfect ; and even after all is done, we are but *unprofitable servants* (Luke xvii. 10.)—nevertheless they are naturally, necessarily, inseparably, and everlastingly connected with a *justifying Faith*.—It is equally manifest, that when the Apostle *James* draws the inference from his Discourse—“ Ye see then how that by Works a man is justified, and not by Faith only”—that he is not *there* speaking of Justification before God ; for “ by the Deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ;” Rom. iii. 20.—but Justification in the sight of *men*. Hence it evidently appears, that there is no real contradiction, but the most perfect harmony between them. Paul would doubtless have said the same things, if he had been speaking to the same persons ; and James the same things in Paul’s circumstances. All this, and abundantly more (of which we cannot here speak particularly) may be learned from attending to the different passages already referred to.

We proceed to consider, that often the *knowledge* of the Word of God very much *depends* upon the *Context* ; and it is impossible to fix and give the true sense, in many places, without it ;—as an evidence of this *dependence*, we shall produce a few plain instances. “ Whom we preach ;” Col. i. 28. Here it is natural, just, and reasonable, to look backwards to the preceding *Context* ; wherein we find the relative *whom* means Christ.—“ Which things are an allegory ;” Gal. iv. 24. The knowledge of these things *depends* upon the *Context*.—“ Which things the Angels desire to look into ;” 1 Pet. i. 12.—What things ? The *Context* informs us, that it is the *Gospel* in general, and the *Sufferings* and *Glory* of Christ in particular.—

And in other portions of the Divine Word, we also find (as in great part of the Book of Proverbs, and many other places in Scripture) that there is no immediate *dependence* upon the *Context*; but the meaning, as hath been observed before, is to be determined by the *Rule* of Faith, *comparing* parallel Scriptures one with another.

But to be more particular, it is not sufficient to speak *agreeable* to the Oracles of God in general; but if we take a Text, the grand enquiry should be—what is the mind of God in *this* part of his Word? What is the principal scope and design which the Holy Ghost, in the language of the inspired Penman, hath more immediately in view in *every* part of the Divine Word which we have occasion to open?—If our *end* in taking the Text doth not agree with this design, we have either an *improper* end in view, or have chosen an *improper* Text; because our Hearers may be apt to imagine, that what we have said upon it (especially if what we say is true and good, considered in itself) is the *real* sense and meaning of the Text.—We must lay down this as a fixed point, that all the *sense* of Scripture, or the *Mind* of God in every part of it, is implied, although not always expressed, in the words which the Holy Ghost makes use of in every particular passage. Hence appears the necessity of duly considering the proper use of the several words, phrases, and expressions, and rightly distinguishing between plain and figurative language. Here it is a very great advantage for a Minister of Christ to understand, at least so much of the Sacred Originals (as well as the Grammar and Rhetorick of the language which he preaches in) as to be able to judge for himself, and communicate to his Hearers the true, proper, and natural signification of the Sacred Phraseology.

To this might be added, an understanding of the method of the inspired Penman's reasoning on the various



various Subjects they treat of—the occasion of their Discourses—the character they sustained—the persons they wrote about—the times and places they lived in—the peculiarities of their style and language—the several parts of the Divine Word—and all the ends proposed in their records.—In a word, the knowledge of so much of every language, art and science, as the inspired Writers particularly refer to, both in the Old and New Testament, is, more or less, useful in expounding the Scriptures, and serviceable to a Minister of Christ.

But all this must be in subordination to the Divine Word, and in humble dependence upon the Divine Spirit. Here all the powers of the human mind, with their utmost improvement, must humbly *bow the knee*; for although, as hath been observed in the last Chapter, there is nothing in Scripture *contrary* to reason, yet as “Heaven is high above the earth” so are God’s *thoughts*, principally in the economy of our Redemption, *above* all our *thoughts*, and all our reasonings; and therefore we may venture to pronounce it *impossible* for the most wise, learned, and eloquent of mankind, without the special influence of the Divine Spirit, *properly* to understand the Gospel of Christ. This evidently appears from Psalm cxix. 118. 1 Cor. ii. 7—10. and numerous other places to the same purpose, which it is not our design to enter into at present.

We beg leave just to observe here, that, although, on the one hand, a person, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, may be able to read the Scriptures, and at the same time (humbling thought!) remain a stranger to that spiritual knowledge which is essential to salvation; and, on the other hand, those who are ignorant of language and science, and yet, by the Grace and Spirit of God, know so much of the sense of the Holy Scriptures as to become *wise unto*

*Salvation* :—*nevertheless* this does by no means render the knowledge we spoke of before useless to a Minister of Christ ;—nor doth it even, when possessed in the highest degree, preclude the necessity of Divine influence.—See more of this in the next Chapter, on the SPIRIT OF PREACHING.

To finish this part of our Subject, we wish to “*stir up the pure minds of all the Ministers of Christ*, by way of remembrance,” carefully to guard against the the two following (we might say) dreadful and destructive extremes.—In the first place, according to what hath been before observed, as the Mind and Will of God are contained in the Words, which he hath been pleased to make use of, *never* to depart from the *express* Words, or the literal, external, and visible sense of Scripture, without absolute necessity; and, on the other hand, *never* to rest in the *Letter*, without the Subject requires it.—The dreadful consequences of *departing* from the *Letter* is too evident to need any *long* proof at present. How long and often have some of the most important facts and histories of Scripture been turned into mystery and allegory !—May we not ask here, what becomes of the inspired Penman’s account of all the truths and realities, which are the grounds of our faith and practice ? Not to enter into particulars—Where is Religion ?—What becomes of Christianity ?—How shall we obtain Salvation, if the account we have of the whole of Christ’s undertaking, both in the Old and New Testament, be not a matter of fact ?—“*If the foundations be removed, what shall the righteous do ?*” We have no longer any *sure word of prophecy*, but all is precarious and uncertain.—On the other hand, if we *rest* entirely in the *Letter*, we can *never* understand its full meaning ; nay, oftentimes we must believe and practise *quite contrary* to the Mind and Will of God ! It was observed, by *resting* in the

*Letter,*

Letter, we can never understand its *full* meaning; because, as the Apostle declares, "the Law is spiritual" (Rom. vii. 14.) even the last *commandment* expressly declares this, in forbidding and condemning the most distant wish or desire after any thing that belongs to our neighbour—"Thou shalt not covet;" Exod. xx. 17.—Both Law and Gospel forbid our taking some parts of Scripture according to the express words. This is too plain to need much evidence—For instance, when Solomon says, "put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite" (Prov. xxiii. 2.) and a greater than Solomon commands us to *pluck out our right eyes*, and *cut off our right hands* (Matt. v. 29, 30.) it is clear, that neither of those precepts should be taken literally, for the sixth Commandment says—"Thou shalt do no murder:" Exod. xx. 13. Matt. xix. 18. And the language of the whole Gospel, consistent with what Paul said to the *Gaoler*, when "he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself," is—"Do thyself no harm;" Acts xvi. 27, 28.—By this figurative language, the duties of sobriety, temperance, and self-denial, are undoubtedly intended and enforced.—There might be mentioned many other Rules for the understanding and explaining of the several Books of Scripture, and the particular parts of the Divine Word, agreeable to their true nature and character; such as what principally relates to the Prophecies, Types, Allegories, or Parables; but as they are most, if not all consistent *with*, and comprehended *in* what hath been already said and *exemplified* (if not expressly mentioned and enumerated) by all good expositors, there shall not now be any further enlargement. But to render our Discourse clear and easy to be understood, it may *sometimes* require to be divided and subdivided into distinct Heads, which brings on the consideration of,

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III. The Doctrines, or Propositions, contained in the Text, and its Exposition.—By *Doctrines*, or *Propositions*, here are to be understood all those Heads of Discourse which are laid down for further consideration and improvement.—We said *sometimes*, because often the words of the Text are more plain and expressive than any *Doctrine* that can be drawn from them, and only want illustration and improvement. Those *Doctrines* ought to contain not only such Articles of Religion, or points of Faith and Practice, as have their foundation in Scripture in general, but such as are of the same kind and nature with our Text contained in it, and which naturally grow out of it, as the body, branches, leaves, and fruit of a tree or plant, from its seed and root.—But as some passages of the Divine Word have many different articles and points of Religion contained in them, which do not always appear, at least to every eye, upon the first view of the Text, yet (like the curious embroidery of the High-Priest's garment, which was composed of many rich, valuable and beautiful parts) are interwoven together, it is necessary, that we should carefully unravel and consider the several parts distinctly by themselves, not as separate *from*, but in connexion *with* each other. This is of great importance, where there is any danger of mistake, lest, by confounding one truth with another, we *darken* the *Counsel* of Heaven “by words without knowledge.”

This affords the best Rule for a number of Heads in a Discourse or Sermon, which should be as few as possible, according to the nature of the Subject; and as many as may fully comprehend all that is necessary to our design; for though a Minister may have a large retentive memory himself, it is not to be supposed, that the greatest part of his Hearers are so highly favoured. By too minute and formal divi-

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sions and subdivisions, we fall into the very error which we intend by *this mean* to guard against; namely, obscurity, confusion, and perplexity; or often at most present our people with a number of dry branches, without any leaves or fruit, instead of a living tree; or a skeleton, without any sinews, flesh, blood, or spirits, instead of a living body. Here a discerning eye, a solid and distinguishing judgment, *a wise and understanding heart*, are of vast importance, not only to divide (for that any one may do) but, even in this respect, "*rightly to divide the Word of Truth.*"

But as numerous passages of Scripture, like a fountain sealed, a rich treasury locked up, contain such abundance and variety of heavenly matter as can scarce be mentioned, much less amplified and improved, in a single Discourse, we should select and dwell upon some of the chief and most important things comprised in the Text, as we apprehend may be most for the profit and edification of our People, agreeable to the main design of the Holy Ghost in that Scripture and the Context, slightly adverting to other things of less moment and concern.—That "*wisdom which is profitable to direct*" will teach us to dispose every *Head*, in such a manner, according to its due place and value, as to have a mutual dependence upon each other, and clearly illustrate the point in which they all meet, so as to make the Discourse one entire whole.—We now proceed,

IV. To consider the *Proof and Confirmation*.—We are now arrived at one of the most important parts of our Subject. This should be the ground and basis of our Discourse; here we are to be particularly careful, that the Foundation be not only well laid, but sufficient to support the weight of the whole Building, lest it totter and fall to the ground. It is here

here we are chiefly concerned in the establishment of some important truth, or the overthrow of some pernicious error, either of a doctrinal or practical nature.

We remember the great Roman Orator talks of leading his Pupils to the mansions of arguments but never were such springs and fountains open to the heathen world, in all their Authors, as are unfolded to us, in the Sacred Writings of the Old and New Testament. And though the Christian Minister is allowed now and then to make use of different language, agreeable to the nature of his Subject, and the capacity of his Audience (which certainly is the best way to know what arguments to use) yet if he would lead his Pupils to the mansions of *arguments*, he must lead them to the Fountain of Life, "the Law and the Testimony," of the ever-blessed God; and make it clear and evident, that all his proofs, though they may not be derived *from*, yet are contained *in*, and agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. We are under no obligation, in religious matters, to believe or practise what any man upon earth, or any Angel in Heaven, says, unless they have—a "thus saith the Lord" for their warrant.

The more weighty and important things are, the more need there is of certain evidence, strong, convincing and infallible proofs; and this is the case in the Holy Scriptures in general, with regard to all the truths and duties revealed; and especially of the weightier matters, both of Law and Gospel. The more important things are, the stronger the evidences, and the more full, express, and decisive, the *arguments* to support them. Here we have not only the *testimony* of the wisest, greatest, and best of men, that ever was born, but of "an innumerable company of Angels"—"of the Spirits of just men made perfect"—of Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles

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—in a word, the testimony of him who *cannot lie*—of him who is *truth itself*—of *the Spirit of truth*, the testimony of a triune God ; and if our Hearers believe not them, “neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead ;” Luke xvi. 31. It is impossible, that we can ever propose any truth of the least spiritual advantage to our Hearers, to be supported and defended, or single out any error in judgement or practice, that ever was, is, or can arise in the world, but what we are furnished with sufficient reasons for in the Holy Scriptures.—We shall speak a word upon both of these.

First. As to the establishment of *Doctrine*.—Our principal concern is to prove, that what is advanced is contained *in*, or agreeable *to* the Word of God. Here, and here alone, can we rest with safety and certainty. From these Sacred Mansions, this Heavenly Treasury, Christ and his Apostles derived their arguments. This is the Touchstone, by which every *Doctrine* must be tried, proved, and stand justified or condemned. To this they directed their Hearers. “Search the Scriptures” (says their adorable Author) John v. 39.—For this the Bereans are so highly commended, for examining the proofs which the Apostles gave of the Doctrines they preached ; Acts xvii. 11.

In order to perform this part of our Discourse, we shall further consider the following things, as more or less, at one time or another, of necessity and importance. We must confirm what we say, either by plain, easy, and express Scriptures ; or what is evidently derived or clearly deduced from them ; and made plain to the understanding, and suited to the capacity of the Hearers, and the peculiar nature of the Subject and Parts we want to confirm or confute, by Precepts and Commands, Scripture Examples, and Scripture Reasons ; all treated so as to prevent or

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remove, and answer every objection.—A little upon each may suffice.

1. A few plain Texts expressed to the point in hand, or such as were originally and evidently intended by the Holy Ghost to convey the very sense to which we apply them; or if not expressed directly in so many words, yet there should be some clear and evident deduction and conclusion fairly drawn from those infallible testimonies. And as in numerous passages of Scripture, we have not only—a “thus saith the Lord” to awe us into the *obedience of Faith* (and even here reason itself obliges us to believe what our finite capacities cannot comprehend)—but as the Great God, although he is under no obligation to give any account of his purposes, hath been pleased, in infinite condescension, to adapt himself to our capacities, not only to teach us the certainty of all that we are to believe and practise, but in many instances to inform us *why* we are to believe and practise what He hath been pleased to declare and command us in his Holy Word; therefore our next business is,

2. To produce from Divine Revelation the most solid *Reasons* for what we affirm. The whole of Religion is “a reasonable service”—the persons concerned in it are *rational* creatures (however debased by the Fall)—and the best and highest *reasons* may be drawn from the Holy Scriptures. This was Paul’s method in the Jewish Synagogue (Acts xvii. 2: xviii. 4.) He not only *proved* the truth and certainty of his Doctrine *from*, but “reasoned with them out of the Scriptures”—shewed the *reasonableness* of what he taught: Hence we find, that when he *spoke* before Felix and Drusilla “concerning the Faith in Christ, he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgement to come;” Acts xxiv. 25. And it is by this mean (through the Divine Blessing) that

that our Hearers are not only wrought upon to *believe*, but are to led to *see* sufficient *reasons* both for their faith and practice of the Gospel.—Another thing is,

3. To prevent or answer all those objections, which may seem most plausible, and likely to be made, so as to affect the point in hand. This was the method, which Paul himself used, as well as exhorted his Son Timothy to practise.—Observe the following interrogatives :—“ What advantage then hath the Jew ? or what profit is there of circumcision ? ” Rom. iii. 1. The Apostle answers the enquiry in the second and following verses of the same Chapter.—“ What shall we say then ? ” Rom. vi. 1. Here, and in the following verse, he cometh forth like a skilful warrior, and meets the objection, which the carnal mind might raise—“ Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound ? God forbid : How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ? ” “ Is the Law sin ? God forbid ; ” Rom. vii. 7. See also Rom. xi. 1, 19, 20. Thus the Apostle, knowing that so great is the weakness of the carnal mind, and the wickedness of the human heart, that mankind are apt to draw false conclusions from the most important doctrines, lest they should hinder the entrance of truth into the souls of his Hearers, either *prevents* or wisely *answers* these objections. It is a great thing to see and feel the force of the Apostle’s reasoning ; and carefully to observe all the general Heads, whence the Sacred Writers derive their arguments for the proof and confirmation of every thing they assert.

Secondly. If our Subject be of a practical nature, then we are to prove that it is *commanded* in the Divine Word ; and that it comes to us approved and recommended by the example of the children of God, under the Old and New Testament. By this



mean, we may most effectually establish any truth, which, at the same time, serves for the CONFUTATION of errors both in judgement and practice.

Although *Confutation* is opposite to Confirmation, yet as contraries often prove contraries, so in duly performing the one, we perform the other also, as a necessary consequence. Hence we read, that the Apostle "increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving, that *the person he was speaking of was very Christ*" (Acts ix. 22.) so that *by proving*, that the person he was speaking of was *very Christ*, he *confounded* the Jews; Acts xviii. 28. Thus, whenever we expressly *confirm* any truth, we at the same time implicitly *confute* the *contrary* error, and by this mean (whether we mention the error or not) "convince the gain-sayers;" Tit. i. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. Thus, after all, *truth* is stronger than *error*, and must prevail.

But if we have cause, and intend directly to *confute* any *error*, or to prove any *proposition* to be *erroneous*; we may then single it out, and shew, that it is contrary to *sound Doctrine*, and consequently condemned in the Sacred Scriptures as such. If the error be of a practical nature, we are then to make it appear, that it is *forbidden* in the Law and Gospel, and condemned, as contrary to the life and power of Religion; so that, *as in confirmation*, the object to which we are immediately directed is truth and duty, as the ground of our Faith, and the matter of our practice; *so in confutation*, the object is error and sin.

Thus, although *this* part of *Preaching* is not always necessary (as many things are so certain in themselves as to need no proof, any more than Exposition) yet other Doctrines often require it—as several controversies in Divinity and Morality; so that it is not enough barely to give the sense, but we must  
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put the point of Doctrine we have opened beyond all controversy ; give assurance of its truth and certainty, so far as we can prevent or answer the objections which may be made, and shew the reasonableness of it. If we would convince as well as instruct, we must not only make our Hearers sensible of what we mean, but make it evident, that what we say is the very Mind and Will of God.

V. APPLICATION.—By *Application* here is meant the use or improvement that may be made of any part of the Doctrines already opened and confirmed, according to the nature of the Subject, and the state and circumstances of the Hearers ; whether for their further information ; or by way of trial, examination, reproof, warning, consolation, exhortation, or direction. Though every Subject, Season, Occasion, or Congregation, may not make it necessary to insert all these uses ; yet, at one time or another, they may be *useful* : we shall accordingly say a little upon each, and begin with,

First. A USE of INFORMATION ; by which we mean those weighty and important articles of Religion that naturally follow from those truths and duties which have been already considered, proved, and illustrated : but much more depends on the judgement of the Speaker. To relate a few instances—suppose our Subject to be the LOVE of GOD, in giving his SON to die for us—it is reasonable here, if ever, from the *greatness* of the gift to infer the *greatness* of his Love, to fill our souls with the most lively gratitude and sacred admiration. But amongst many other things, if Paul and John were the Preachers, possibly they would draw such a conclusion as this—“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?” (Rom. viii. 32.) or probably they would infer the duty of *self-dedication*—“Ye are not  
your

your own ; ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Not only our love and obedience to him, but to one another, is a *reasonable service*—"If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John iv. 11.

Second. By way of TRIAL and EXAMINATION.—This is a point of great importance. Here we should be exceedingly careful to lay down such, and *only* such marks, by which our Hearers, under a Divine Blessing, may prove, and come to the knowledge of the real state and condition of their souls. A mistake herein may be very fatal—should we set them *too low* ; or hold forth, as marks and evidences of Christianity, in general—or of an interest in Christ, as Faith, Hope, Love, or any other Grace, in particular ; such as may be found in any persons who are destitute of those Graces, and consequently do not belong to Christ ;—we are in danger of deceiving their souls, and causing them to cry—"Peace, Peace ; when there is no Peace." On the other hand, if we set the marks and evidences of Christianity *too high* ; or insist upon the greatest degrees of every evidence, as essential to its very being and existence, instead of comforting and encouraging those, who may have been made the happy partakers of true, but want strong Grace to go forward ; *we make the hearts of these people sad, whom God would not have made sad.* For this reason, it is necessary to understand, and make proper distinctions between the truth and growth of Religion ; and search and examine accordingly. A person may be *a tree of righteousness of the Lord's planting*, and not *a tall cedar*. There are babes, and young men, as well as Fathers in Christ.

The great design of this Head of Examination is first, that the unconverted sinner may come to a real sense



sense of his state and condition, as "miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" and heartily concur with the gracious and heavenly counsels of the Divine Saviour.

2dly. That the true Saint, having *found* Christ in him, "the Hope of Glory;" may take the comfort, and enjoy the unspeakable privilege of such a blessed state, and go on from one degree of Grace and strength to another; like "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

And it is manifest, that we should insist upon such, and *only* such marks and evidences of Christianity in general; and every branch which we may handle in particular; as are clearly and plainly held out in the Word of God, according to the Subject that we are pursuing. For instance—suppose our Subject be the *Knowledge* of Christ; and the important question proposed under this Head be this—How shall I *know* that I am the happy partaker of this most excellent and all-important *Knowledge*? The Word of God furnishes us with the following evidences:—Prayer to Christ; faith and trust in Christ; and love and obedience to Christ.—*Prayer to Christ*—"If thou knewest the Gift of God (replieth the adorable Redeemer to the Woman of Samaria) and who it is that faith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;" John iv. 10.—*Faith and trust in Christ*—"They that know thy name (saith the inspired Penman) will put their trust in thee;" Psalm ix. 10.—*Love to Christ*—"Love is of God (saith the Disciple, who lay in Christ's bosom) and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God;" 1 John iv. 7.—*Love and obedience to Christ*—"And hereby (saith the same inspired Writer) we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments;" 1 John ii. 3.

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Third. By way of REPROOF.—“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him;” Lev. xix. 17. “*Not hate thy brother in thine heart.*”—This speaks the Law of Love; the performance of it, a proof of love; and the neglect of this duty is a want of love. The Holy Ghost calls it *hatred*: nevertheless it is certainly a tender and difficult part of the Work of a Gospel Minister to *reprove* his Hearers in a proper manner.—“They commonly hate him that rebuketh in the gate;” Amos v. 10. “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee;” Prov. ix. 8. There is abundant need *for carefulness*, not only who, but for what, and how we *reprove*.—“He that reproveth a scorner, *often* getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth to himself a blot;” Prov. ix. 7. But although this teaches the necessity of attending most carefully to the advice of Christ—“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your Pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you” (Matt. vii. 6.) it is nevertheless the duty of the Church in general to *reprove* for sin—“Thou shalt in any wise (saith the Text before quoted) rebuke thy neighbour,” at all events, be the consequences what they may.

But we are speaking now of the Ministers of Christ: they are called upon not only to bear private, but sometimes publick testimony (as the Apostle did against the Athenians) against all errors both in judgment and practice—“Open rebuke is better than secret love;” Prov. xxvii. 5.—*Open rebuke*, if properly given, is *open love*; and as *open love*, by reason of the tendency that it hath to do more good, “is better than secret love;” so the display thereof is preferable to the bare existence of it in the heart.

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The Apostle exhorts Timothy *to rebuke them that sin* "before all, that others may fear" (*i. e.*) shew your love to their souls in this part of your work, by a faithful manifestation of the Divine displeasure at their sins.—"*That others may fear*"—not that others may triumph in the fall of a brother;—no;—"Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity;"—not that others may despise and upbraid him, as the Pharisee did the Publican, but *fear to sin* against God.—"*Not suffer sin upon him*," saith the Text. In very deed, however light sin may now sit upon those who commit it; yet it is a burthen, a real and unsupportable *burthen*, and wherever it is felt, the *heaviest* of all other burthens; a *burthen*, which, if not removed here, will press the soul down to the lowest Hell hereafter. Surely then, if we have any love or compassion for precious and immortal souls, it becomes us to use all possible means to help in this respect (to use the language of the Prophet) to "cause Jerusalem to know her abominations," in order to be made the happy instruments of removing the load. To perform this, in a right manner, should be our principal concern. And, if ever wisdom, faithfulness, love, compassion, patience, and long-suffering, are necessary to proportion our *rebukes* to the nature of the offence, that is intended to be censured—it is here required.—"Of some (saith the Apostle) have compassion—others save with fear;" Jude 22, 23.—Some must be *rebuked sharply*; Tit. i. 13.—The deeper the wound, the deeper the probe must go.—The more God is dishonoured, Christ pierced, his Spirit grieved, his people *caused to transgress*, or his *enemies to blaspheme*—the more holy indignation against sin, and zeal for the recovery of the sinner, must be shewn—"Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."—This is the design of *reproof*—not to *hurt*, but to *heal*; not to *bind*, but to *help* and



and *recover* those who are fallen—Others must be *re-stored* more in the Spirit of meekness (Gal. vi. 1.) not only with *all* the *authority* of a Minister of Christ, but (as Paul saith) “with all long-suffering, and Doctrine;” 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. ii. 15.—And Oh! what a blessed effect hath *reproof*, when properly given and received. The wisest of men declares—“As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear;” Prov. xxv. 12.—“*A wise reprover*”—a Minister, who *reproves* with the *meekness of wisdom*, according to the character, station, temper, disposition, and circumstances of the offender; and the time, place, nature, circumstances, and aggravation of the offence. “*An obedient ear*”—one who is not only attentive to the *reproofs* of wisdom, but receives the admonition kindly, and is *convinced* of the evil, *brought to repentance*, and *turns* “from the error of his way.”—“*An ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold.*”—By this happy union, “a wise reprover *and* an obedient ear” meeting together, the future life and conversation of the latter becomes pure; his *light shines before men* beautiful and ornamental, and he is enabled to “adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” Such a one will not hate his *rebuker*: No; frequently “he that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue;” Prov. xxviii. 23.—“Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee;” Prov. ix. 8. But this cannot be performed, unless *we shew our People* their danger, as well as *their transgressions*;—not only the fault and sinfulness of sin, but the terrible consequences which follow. This naturally brings us to observe,

Fourth. Another principal part of the Gospel Ministry, which is “*WARNING*;” Col. i. 28.—A work, which Christ and all his Ministers, under the Old and New

New Testament, performed, and which all other Ministers, who desire to say, in their dying moments (adopting the language of the blessed Apostle)—“ I am pure from the blood of all men,” must perform; Acts xx. 26, 31. *The watchmen of the house of Israel*, and all the Ministers of the Gospel, *must not only bear the Word at God's Mouth*, but *give them warning* from him. “ Thus saith the Lord ”—“ When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet, if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul;” Ezek. iii. 17—19. Nor are we to *warn* the wicked and unruly only, but the righteous also: *David* was “ a man after God's own heart,” and yet wanted *warning*; 1 Sam. xiii. 14. Acts xiii. 22.—“ By them is thy servant warned:” Ps. xix. 11. *The former* is to be *warned* by the *terrors of the Lord* “ to flee from the wrath to come;” the *latter* against *drawing back*. This is the great design of *warning*—to prevent sin and death, *eternal death*. The blessed Apostle “ ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears;” Acts xx. 31. His heart was affected, *duly affected*, with the misery and ruin of his Hearers. All the *fearful judgements*, which happened to the Israelites in the Wilderness, “ are written for our admonition,” as well as all the *terrors*, threatened in the Book of God, and are to be made use of to the grand purpose of *persuading* men.—We are now come to one of the most weighty and important parts of the Gospel Ministry, which is,

Fifth. CONSOLATION.—It is the Will of God, that all his People shall be *comforted*. To this great end,

1st. He bears the endearing name of "the God of all comfort;" 2 Cor. i. 3.—And Christ is stiled, by way of eminence and peculiarity (soul-reviving, transporting, blessed, adorable name!) "The consolation of Israel;" Luke ii. 25.—"If there be therefore any CONSOLATION in Christ" (saith the Apostle, Phil. ii. 1.)—And may we not ask with the greatest reverence and thankfulness—Is there any *consolation* to be found out of Christ? No. If ever we have any spiritual and Divine *consolation*, it must be *by Christ*; 2 Cor. i. 5.—"I, even I am he that comforteth you;" Isaiah li. 12.—Agreeable to this, the Holy Ghost is stiled *the Comforter*—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another COMFORTER." The Holy Ghost is the *Gift* of God the Father. The mediation and intercession of Christ is the *meritorious cause* of our having this great and important *Gift* bestowed upon us. And the Holy Ghost himself, as *Glorifier* of Christ, "which proceedeth from the Father and the Son," is the wonderful Agent in the application, in beginning, carrying on, and bringing to perfection, *all* the work of Grace in the hearts of the redeemed, till they are "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light;" John xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7, 14. Col. i. 12.

2d. The persons that are to be *comforted* are the People of God—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my People, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem;" Isaiah xl. 1, 2. Hence is recorded, that *exceeding great and precious Promise*, which seems to respect Gospel days—"For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody;" Isaiah li. 3. See Isaiah xxix. 19. This is consistent with what the great Apostle declares concerning this part of the Gospel Ministry—"He  
that



that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort ;” 1 Cor. xiv. 3.—This supposes and naturally leads to another very important consideration, which is,

3d. The state and circumstances, in which the People of God stand in need of COMFORT.—In general, it is a state of TRIBULATION. Christ saith, “in the world ye shall have tribulation ;” John xvi. 33.—“Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward ;” Job v. 7. Ecclef. iv. 1. Isa. lxi. 1, 2. Matt. v. 4. Isa. liv. 11. 1 Theff. v. 14. 2 Cor. i. 4. *Troubles* of various kinds. Nor are the People of God exempted any more than others—“Many are the afflictions of the righteous,” both in body and mind ; they are liable to the same pains, the same sickness, and the same diseases, as others ; and often feel and suffer more. Psalm xxxiv. 19.—“Without *are* fightings, within *are* fears ;” 2 Cor. vii. 5.—“We must, through much (and often great) tribulation, enter the Kingdom of God ;” Acts xiv. 22. A great part of this often lies in *persecution*.—“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution,” more or less, of one kind or another ; 2 Tim. iii. 12. And although God *never leaves, nor forsakes* his People (Heb. xiii. 5.) yet they often feel the loss of his *comfortable* presence, and are frequently *walking in darkness*, and *under the hidings* of his face :—“Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me ;” Isaiah xlix. 14. Temptations also, *divers and manifold temptations*, make a great part of their afflictions ; and though their heavenly Father hath promised, that he “will not suffer *them* to be tempted above that *they* are able” (1 Cor. x. 13.) yet, in conformity to their glorious Head, they likewise *suffer, being tempted*. But the most melancholy of all is this—although many times “the enemy *cometh* in like a flood” (Isaiah lix. 19.)—though *the world hateth them* (John xv. 19.)—and God for a time withholdeth *the light of his countenance*—yet their own corruptions, *the body of death,*

death, which they carry about with them, oftentimes overwhelm their spirits.

4th. The Holy Scriptures, all the means of Grace, and ordinances of the Gospel, are *breasts of consolation*: Isaiah lxvi. 11. Agreeable to this, the Ministers of Christ are called *Sons of consolation*; because they speak unto men, not only to edification and exhortation, but *Comfort*. In order to accomplish these important purposes, the Ministers of Christ are to open all the Springs and Fountains of *consolation*, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures, as the objects of the believers joy, and the matter of their *consolation* (Neh. viii. 10.)—The Person of Christ (Philip. ii. 1.)—the love and sympathy of his Heart—"We have not an High-Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. iv. 15.)—The *fruits* of his obedience even unto death Cant. ii. 3, 4, 5. Psalm cxix. 76.—Hence we hear the Church breaking forth in the most affectionate language—"He brought me to the Banqueting-house, and his banner over me was Love."—The *vicaries* Christ hath obtained: John xvi. 33.—The *sealing* and *supports* of his Spirit: 2 Cor. vii. 4. Psalm xxiii. 4.—His *Presence*: Psalm xvi. 11. Acts ii. 25.—The light of his *Countenance*: Acts ii. 28.—"The shadow of *his* Wings:" Psalm lxiii. 7.—The *joys* of *his* *Salvation*: Psalm li. 12. Prov. xiv. 10. Psalm cxxvi.—The promised *Reward*: Matt. v. 12.—The *Hope of Glory*: Rom. v. 2. xii. 12.—All the Doctrines, Promises, and Blessings, of his glorious and everlasting Gospel: Rom. xiv. 4. Psalm lxxxix. 15. cxix. 50. Isaiah xii. 3. Jerem. xv. 16. xxxi. 13. Psalm xix. 8. Isaiah lxi. 10. Phil. iii. 3. Matt. ix. 2.—These are the Springs and Fountains of great—exceeding—unspeakable—abundant—strong—abiding—glorious—and everlasting Joy and Consolation: Acts viii. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 13. Jude 24. 2 Cor. vii. 4. 1 Pet. i. 8. Phil. i. 26. 2 Cor. i. 5. Heb. vi. 18. If. xxxv. 10. 2 Thess. ii. 16.

5th. To this end, the People of God are to be put in mind of the necessity, use, and design of their afflictions :—" Wherein ye greatly rejoice (saith the Apostle) though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations ; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ ;" 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.—" He doth not afflict willingly the children of men" (Lam. iii. 33.) but for his own Glory, and their spiritual and eternal Good (Rom. viii. 28. Pl. cxix. 67, 71.)—to take away sin—to cure them of self-confidence (2 Cor. i. 9, 10.)—to put them upon self-examination (Jerem. xxxi. 18, 19.)—to try their graces—Faith, Hope, Love (2 Cor. xii. 7. Zech. xiii. 9.)—to *humble* and *purify* them—to *work* " the peaceable fruits of righteousness" (Heb. xii. 11.)—and " a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory ;" 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Sixth. DIRECTION to the proper means of Safety and Relief.—To perform this in a due manner, an *understanding* of the true state and circumstances of our Hearers is absolutely necessary ; not in general only, but in particular—that we may be able, like our Divine Master, " to speak a word in season to him that is weary ;" Isaiah l. 4. Matt. xi. 28.—*As* there are various remedies in nature, suited to the different diseases incident to the human body, and every medicine, however good in itself, is not alike applicable to every person, nor even the same person in different cases—so the Holy Scriptures (*the men of our counsel* ; Psalm cxix. 24.) " abound with all things necessary, and answerable to the manifold diseases of the human mind. And as " every thing is beautiful in its Season" (Eccles. iii. 11.) it becomes the skilful Physician of the soul (if we may use the simile) to lay to heart the case of his Hearers, so as not only to give good but the *best* advice to all his spiritual Patients.



Patients; yet this is not sufficient (however agreeable to the Rules of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, and the happy experience of all those who have been in like circumstances, and, by the Grace of God, in the use of the means, found relief) but he must press upon them the vast and infinite importance of *taking* the advice.—This leads us to the last part of our Plan, which is,

Seventh. EXHORTATION.—This is so essential a part of the Gospel Ministry, that (as before observed) it sometimes is taken for the whole of *Preaching* (Luke iii. 18. Acts xiii. 15. Heb. xiii. 22.) and more especially comprehends all the *application*: Rom. xii. 8.—By *Exhortation* here is meant more especially a kind, hearty, and affectionate way and manner of treating with our Hearers, inviting them to their duty and happiness, so as to excite and stir them up to the diligent improvement of every Grace, by all the motives which the Gospel affords. Agreeable to this, the Apostles of Christ *exhorted* their Hearers “that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord”—“to continue in the Grace of God”—“to continue in the faith”—to “abound more and more, *in walking, and pleasing God* ;” Acts x. 23. xiii. 43. xiv. 22. 1 Thess. iv. 1.—Without multiplying particulars, we read, in Acts xix. 8. of Paul’s “disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God.” And although it is an humbling truth, that God alone can effectually persuade Japheth (and it is an infinite mercy, that he will) yet it is nevertheless the indispensable duty, and will be, more or less, the *delight* of all the Ministers of Jesus Christ, whose hearts are fixed upon the Work, in humble subserviency to, and entire dependance upon, the promised influences of the Divine Spirit, to use every possible motive to answer the grand design of their Ministry—to *win souls, and make them wise unto Salvation*.

## C H A P. VIII.

## ON THE SPIRIT OF PREACHING.

*The Spirit of Preaching defined---consists in the Operations of the Spirit of Christ in the Hearts of all his Ministers, and in their Spirits being drawn forth in the Exercise of every Grace and Gift proper to the Work. The beautiful Consistency and Harmony of this Union cleared up.---The whole Discourse divided into two Parts, Cause and Effect.---Cause proved to be the Spirit of God; in which the Nature, Necessity, Reality, and Excellency of Divine Operations and Influences, are considered.---The Nature shewn principally from its Effects and Properties.---Necessity from the express Word of God, respecting the Greatness of the Work, and the Weakness of even the best of Instruments.---The Reality of Divine Influence, as it respects Christ's Ministers in every Age of the World, clearly manifested from the Experience of the greatest Ministers of Christ, under the Old and New Testament; chiefly from the Prayer of Christ to his Heavenly Father, in Behalf of his Church in general, and the Promise of Christ more especially directed to all his Ministers. The transcendent Excellency of this Blessing more fully illustrated and amplified.*

**I**N the two last Discourses were considered the *Subject Matter of Preaching, and the method of handling the different parts of a Sermon, agreeable to the Holy Scripture*; and these are certainly points of great, of infinite concern, both to ourselves and our Hearers; but if we are really desirous of performing our duty, so as most effectually, with the Blessing of God, to promote the grand design of our Ministry, we must

not neglect to have a due regard to the *Manner* as well as the *Matter* thereof; for the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls warned and commanded his Disciples to *take heed*, not only *what*, but *how* they *heard* (Mark iv. 24. Luke viii. 18.) and so, in effect, he commands all his Ministers to take heed, not only *what*, but *how* they preach; and in what manner they discharge this part of their sacred and important Office.

The *Manner of Preaching* respects both the internal and external parts of the *duty*—the former of these naturally leads us, to consider the Spirit; and the latter, the Language and Delivery of our Discourses. It is the internal part we are now about to lay open—this is our first and principal concern.

The whole, and every part of Divine Service ought to be conducted in a *Manner*, agreeable to the Nature, Mind, and Will of its adorable Author, according to the Revelation he hath been graciously pleased to give us of himself in his Holy Word: It must be performed *spiritually*, or it can never be performed acceptably—"God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth;" John iv. 24.

By *the Spirit of Preaching* is to be understood, all that assistance and influence which the Minister of the Gospel derives from Christ, through the Agency of the Divine Spirit, in the discharge of this duty, together with the lively and vigorous exercise of all those Gifts and Graces which are proper to the Work in conformity to the precepts and practice of Christ his Apostles, and Prophets.

The Substance of the above Definition may be fully comprehended in these two common Heads of Discourse—the Fountain and the Stream—the Root and the Fruit—or, to speak without a simile, the

*Causes*



*Cause and Effect.* The propriety of *this* is abundantly manifest—"Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above;" James i. 17. Yes; Ministers and Churches, if they desire to find the *Cause* of all their Gifts, and all their Graces, must penetrate through the veil; they must look from their own hearts to the heart of him who is now "on the right-hand of the Majesty in the Heavens." Christ, as Mediator, hath *the Spirit without measure*; John iii. 34. — "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell" (Col. i. 19.) for this very purpose, that out "of his fulness *all his Members, and all his Ministers, may receive*, and Grace for Grace;" John i. 16. This is effected by the Agency and Energy of the Divine Spirit. As the wheels in Ezekiel's vision were moved by the Spirit of the living creatures, so (if the expression may be used) all the wheels of the soul—all the powers, gifts and graces, of every Member, and every Minister of Jesus Christ, are set and kept in their true and proper motion, by the Spirit of Life, which is derived from him, by "the Seven Spirits which are before his Throne;" Rev. i. 4. Thus the Holy Ghost, in his vital and heavenly influence, may, with the greatest propriety, be stiled the *Cause* of all those gifts and graces; and those gifts and graces, with their lively and vigorous exertions, are the blessed effects of the Divine operation.

Before we enter particularly into the farther proof and illustration of the Subject, let us pause awhile; and stand and admire the beautiful consistency, the sweet and delightful harmony, between the operations of the Spirit of Christ, in the hearts of all his Ministers, and of their Spirits, as engaged in the duty of *Preaching*.

As the heavenly energy of the Divine Spirit and the holy activity of the Christian are united together

in our experience (Philip. ii. 12, 13.) so likewise they are in the Ministry of the Word; Rom. i. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 9.—“ I also labour (saith the Apostle Paul) striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily;” Col. i. 29. Paul “*abounded* in the Word and Doctrine;” all his powers were ardently engaged; he strove earnestly for the recovery and Salvation of his Hearers; “*he travailed* in birth until Christ *was* formed in *them*;” Gal. iv. 19. Every gift and every grace were drawn forth into the most lively and vigorous exercise; but it was *according* to his working—the *working* of Jesus Christ by his Spirit in his heart; *agreeable* and *in proportion* to his operations—“ which worketh in me mightily.” This he humbly and thankfully acknowledges to be the *Cause* of his “*labouring* more abundantly than all” the rest of the Apostles, who, by Divine Grace alone, *were all what they were*, and performed all that they performed: 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Accordingly we shall begin with the first of these great and weighty Points beforementioned (*i. e.*) the *Cause*; or consider the Spirit of Christ, as aiding and assisting all his Ministers, in the due performance of this work, in every age of the world. Here the Nature, Necessity, Reality, and Excellency of Divine Influence will demand our most serious and particular attention. And may the God of all Grace so enable us to handle this great and weighty Subject, that, if any, who are strangers to *the Spirit of Preaching*, should ever attend to what is here advanced, they may become truly sensible of its infinite importance, and be made the happy partakers of it. And may those who know it already by gracious experience have their knowledge abundantly increased, *their pure minds stirred up* “by way of remembrance,” so as to keep and maintain the Life, Power,

Power, and *Spirit of Preaching* throughout the whole of their Ministry.

As to *the nature of Divine Influence*, what is essential to it, or wherein it consists, this is best known by its **EFFECT and PROPERTIES**.—By its *Effect* upon the happy partakers of it. By the Properties ascribed to it in the Holy Scriptures—the only safe, sure, and infallible *Rule of the Spirit of Preaching*, by which alone we can distinguish between what is human and Divine, as the fountain is known by the streams, the tree by its fruit, or the Sun by its light, heat and energy, in the natural world. What comes from God, as the God of Nature, bears a resemblance of him in those glorious Perfections he manifests, and makes himself known by, in the works of Creation ; What comes from him, as the God of Grace and our reconciled Father in Jesus Christ, leaves a lasting, we may say an *everlasting* impression of the *Image* of Christ upon our hearts, and makes the soul more humble, thankful, holy and heavenly ; more jealous of itself, more dependent upon Jesus, and more full of zeal for his Glory, and the good of mankind.

So likewise all the gracious *influences* upon the soul of man, which proceed from God, are perfectly agreeable to the *Written Word* of God ; for they bear *his Image* ; they are of an humbling spirit, and of an holy and heavenly nature and tendency ; they come *from* God, *resemble* God, and *lead to* God. Now it is of great importance, that we should make a just distinction here, lest we should ascribe that to the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from a corrupt heart, or a busy adversary ; or call the exercise of the *mere Gift of Preaching*, without the Grace, *the Spirit of Preaching*. Let our gifts of knowledge, wisdom, memory, fancy, or elocution, be ever so great, though they all come from God, and are to be faithfully used and diligently improved for his Glory, and the edification



edification of the Church, for whose sake they are bestowed ; yet *they* differ from the *Grace*, which is always, more or less, as before observed, of an humbling, sanctifying nature, and of an heavenly tendency. And may we, by Divine assistance, be enabled to make it our constant aim, throughout the whole of our Ministry, to guard against ever being influenced with any thing that may have the least tendency to cloud the Subject, where light and knowledge are necessary to discern its true nature and importance ; and, on the other hand, not to remain unaffected, when reasonable passion is proper for the Subject ; then may we never feel in ourselves, or raise in the Congregation, wrong affections.

But this will be more fully considered in its proper place. It would be in vain to enlarge here upon *the nature of Divine Influence*, with *those* by whom the necessity of it is denied. Indeed, were it only in itself an useful and desirable blessing, though we should “ covet earnestly the best gifts,” yet we need not be so much concerned about it. But

2dly. *Preaching* the Gospel is a work of such importance, that all who engage therein stand in absolute need of Divine assistance, in order to perform it in a right way and manner. This we are fully assured of, from the express testimony of those who knew and experienced most of it ; nothing is more evident, if we realize these two things—the greatness of the work, and the weakness of even the *best* workmen.

First. *The greatness of the work* in general, which is equally applicable to this particular Ordinance, and hath been already considered in Chap. I. Both are strongly indicated, by one of the ablest Ministers of the New Testament, that ever engaged in the Service of Christ and his Church. Hence we find, the *Apostle* breaking out into this humble and devout exclamation

exclamation—"Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16.)—*Who* is the human or angelic Being, who in, or of, or by himself, is fit, prepared, and qualified to undertake and perform this sacred and heavenly Office?—*Who*, without Divine Assistance, can "rightly *divide* the Word of Truth," and *give* to every one "their portion in due season?"—*Who* can fully open and unfold those deep, great, and wonderful Mysteries, "which Angels *themselves* desire to look into?"—*Who* can properly handle and improve their amazing and glorious Contents?—*Who* is the man possessed of all that humility, magnanimity, faithfulness, wisdom, diligence, zeal, and seriousness—of all those Divine and heavenly accomplishments which are adequate to such an arduous, difficult, and laborious an undertaking?—*Who*, after all, can render even the best Discourses effectual?—*Who*, but God himself, can give success *to*, and command a blessing *upon*, our most earnest and hearty endeavours to promote his Glory, and the spiritual good of our Hearers?—*Who* can fathom the reasons of those different, dreadful, and glorious effects of the Gospel—of our being to some "the favour of death unto death; and to *others* the favour of life unto life," which will be manifest, when we come to *give up* our account? But it is not designed here to enlarge upon the meaning of this awful and affecting Passage; for it is evidently the language of a heart deeply impressed with a sense of the greatness of the Work; and we may add,

Secondly. The *weakness* of even the best of instruments, who are employed therein. This is another clear and convincing proof of the *necessity* of *Divine influence*. We are willing to grant all those natural powers and abilities to the human mind which God hath endowed it with, and to include every thing that hath been, is, or can be acquired in the diligent improvement

improvement of them. What is meant here, speaking in general, is, that such is the nature of man, as a fallen creature (which is not our present business to shew at large) that he not only stands in need of being “renewed *at first* in the Spirit of his mind,” but likewise of Divine Grace and Assistance through the whole of his life, to perform every *good* work, and needs *extraordinary* help from above, to *preach* the Gospel in such a manner as to *please* God, and be *accepted* by him: Nor is this the case only with those who may be looked upon, in a comparative view, as having but weak parts; but even those who have the greatest share both of *natural* and *acquired* abilities. This seems to have lain with great weight upon the spirit of the Apostle—“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves;” 2 Cor. iii. 5. Neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any of their Brethren, nor all united, could study, or meditate, or contrive any thing in the Work to purpose, without supernatural assistance: in very deed, the Ministers of Christ are more beholden to the Divine Spirit than many are apt to imagine. But the point is moreover expressly decided by an infallible Judge; *one*, who perfectly knows all the strength and ability, or rather the weakness and inability of fallen man;—*a Judge*, who “searcheth the hearts,” and weighs the actions of all his creatures, and hath assured even his first Disciples, that *without him they could do nothing*; John xv. 5. This is the amount, this is *all* the amount of our doings; without Divine Assistance, it comes to just nothing. Here the necessity, the *absolute* necessity, not only of union to Christ for the performance of any the least thing that is spiritually good, pleasing and acceptable to God, is manifest and evident; but even of Believers and Ministers of Christ themselves receiving constant strength and supplies



of his Spirit, in order to the due performance of every part of their work and duty, is expressly declared.

The truth we maintain here is this—without Christ's *strengthening* his Ministers "with might by his Spirit in the inner man," the best of them are unable to "serve God acceptably" in this weighty and important Work.

Were we only speaking of the common *influences* of Heaven, we would argue from the less to the greater, and ask the question—Is it necessary for God to instruct and teach the ploughman (Isaiah xxviii. 26.) in natural things, which respect only the body, and its temporal subsistence, and not the Minister of Christ, in the communication as well as preparation of those spiritual and eternal provisions, which are essential to the very life, as well as health and happiness of the precious and immortal soul? The *rain that cometh down from Heaven*—the air that surrounds us—the breath in our nostrils—the light, the heat, the energy of the Sun—however necessary for the life and preservation of mankind, are not more essential in nature than the *influences* of the Spirit for this greater, better, best of purposes. Yes; not only Ministers but Hearers of the Word have abundant reason to join with holy importunity in the prayer of the Spouse—"Awake, O North Wind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out;" Cant. iv. 16. This is true of *Hearers* (as before observed) as well as *Preachers*; and both have abundant reason to unite: for there is the greatest probability of those Ministers doing good to the souls of others, who are under the *influence* of the good Spirit of God themselves (as to such the *Promise* is made; Matt. xxviii. 20.) yet even then, without his heavenly Agency upon the hearts of their *Hearers* also—without his working *with* as well as *in* them, they cannot

not convert or recover one soul, or do any thing towards the edification of the Church.

We may be certain, that he who *spake* as “never man spake,” also *preached* in the Spirit; and yet we find, alas! numbers, likely far the greatest part of his Hearers, unconverted! What a striking proof this, of the need of the Spirit of Christ being given to those who *bear*, as well as those who *preach* the Gospel. See more of this, as it respects the Church, in Chapter I. Section 5. Page 30. *on the efficient Cause of all the good that is done in the Gospel Ministry.*—It is in this case, as it is with private Christians in their experience. In vain would all the Hosts of Heaven unite with us against our spiritual enemies; their efforts, their kindest *efforts*, would utterly fail, unless the Lord of Hosts, the King of Glory himself, enter the field.

So also let a *Paul* plant with the utmost skill, care, concern, affection, diligence, and heavenly activity; *plant*, as the limner said he drew his picture, as for eternity (and this is the duty, this should be the delight of every Minister of Jesus)—let an Apollos exert the whole strength of his soul, and draw forth all the powers of his eloquence, in *watering* the Church; all would be in vain, without the energetic influences of the Holy Ghost: therefore let others who “are labourers together with God” in this glorious Work be stirred up to an holy emulation—who shall do most, and least depend upon it—who shall do most, and most depend upon “God that giveth the increase.”—Yet after all we are satisfied, that their “sufficiency is of God;” it is *he* that *makes* them “able Ministers of the New Testament” (2 Cor. iii. 6.) however *insufficient* they are in themselves, *his Grace is sufficient for them*; they “can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth them:” the weakest can perform the Work aright  
in

in his strength, and the strongest cannot do without it. This brings us to consider,

Secondly. *The reality of Divine influence*; or to shew, that this great and invaluable Blessing hath been, is, and ever will be graciously bestowed upon all the true Ministers of Christ, in the way of his own appointments.—That the Holy Spirit, in conjunction with the Father and the Son, is not only concerned in *all* the works of Nature, Providence and Grace; that he not only qualifies *for*, and calls all the Ministers of Christ *to* their Office, and instructs them in the knowledge of their duty; but graciously assists them in the whole, and enables them to perform every part, as far as they do it in a manner pleasing and acceptable to God—these are great and momentous truths, which it is not our present business to consider, but that which concerns the Work of the Holy Spirit more especially in this part of a Minister's labours—the act of *Preaching*.

That we may not *darken* “counsel by words without knowledge,” in a Subject of such importance to all the Ministers of Christ, and which so nearly affects the *Church*, “which he hath purchased with his own blood,” we would wish to have it remembered through the *whole*, that it is not intended curiously to enquire into the particular way and manner in which the *inspired* Preachers were influenced and affected; nor to attempt exactly to draw a line of distinction between them and their successors in this respect. What is meant here is to shew the truth and reality of Divine influence in both; at the same time to insist principally upon those operations of God in the heart, which are necessary *for* and are common *to* all his Ministers (1 Cor. xii. 13.) and derived from the fulness of Christ, in the careful and diligent use of those means he hath appointed,



in order to the glorious end proposed—we shall accordingly,

First. Look back to the Ministers of Christ under the Old and New Testament: Here it may be observed, that as “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” what they spake and wrote by Divine inspiration was as much the mind and will of God (we mean that it was the mind and will of God, that it should be written) as the Covenant graven by his own fingers on tables of stone—the Law proclaimed by himself on Mount Sinai. But imperfection, more or less, mingles itself with the Discourses of the holiest, wisest, and best of men: the Writings and Sermons of all *other* Ministers are just so much, and no more free from errors and falsehood than as they are agreeable to the same Word, and animated by the same Spirit, which so powerfully influenced the *inspired* Penmen in their sacred and heavenly Compositions; we mean, as before, the same Spirit in his ordinary, yet gracious and powerful operations, effectual to all the purposes of his Glory, and the performance of every part of their duty in the present day.

But to return to speak concerning the Ministers of Christ under the Old and New Testament.—What is there recorded of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls is true in some measure of all his Ministers.—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;” Luke iv. 18, 19. (See Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, 3. and xi. 2.) As the Spirit of the Lord not only qualified and called our blessed Redeemer to the Work, but in a most wonderful manner aided and assisted him in this important

portant part of his Office, as the great Prophet of his Church; *so* the same Spirit, which he possessed without measure, in all its fulness; *a measure of the same Spirit* rests upon all his faithful Ministers. Accordingly we read of the Lord's being *with* Moses and Aaron's *mouth* (Exod. iv. 12.)—of *the Spirit's resting upon* Eldad and Medad (Numb. xi. 26.)—of Joshua being "full of the Spirit of wisdom" (Deut. xxxiv. 9.)—of "the good hand of God *being upon*" Ezra and Jeremiah (Ezra vii. 9. Jer. i. 9.)—of a Seraphim's flying with a live coal, which he took from off the Altar, and laying it upon Isaiah's mouth (Isa. vi. 6, 7.)—of the Lord's being *with* Jeremiah (Jer. i. 8.)—of the Spirit's *entering into* Ezekiel (Ezek. ii. 2.)—of Micah's being "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgement and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (Micah iii. 8.)—of Paul's *preaching* being "in demonstration of the Spirit;" 1 Cor. ii. 4.—and to mention no more—of Peter and the rest of the Apostles *preaching* the Gospel "with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven;" 1 Pet. i. 12.—We now come to shew,

Second. That Divine Assistance and the Spirit of Christ are by no means confined to the Apostles and Prophets; but in a greater or less degree graciously bestowed upon Pastors and Teachers, all the true Ministers of Christ, in every age of the world. They have been, they are, and will be, "all made to drink into one Spirit;" 1 Cor. xii. 13. In confirmation of this, Wisdom itself, even that wonderful Person, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," hath furnished us with ample and sufficient proof. "The faithful and true witness" hath supplied us with a two-fold argument, such as may serve instead of ten thousand others; an *argument*, which, if properly weighed and attended to, must

must put the Doctrine proposed beyond all farther dispute; we mean, the *Prayer* and *Promise* of Christ.—

(1.) The *Prayer* of Christ in behalf of all his Church in general—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."—(2.) The *Promise* of Christ to all his Ministers in particular—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

Now unless both the *Prayer* and the *Promise* of Christ fail (which is absolutely impossible) all his true Ministers must enjoy his spiritual Presence Assistance, and Influence: Christ knew that his heavenly Father *always heard him*; more especially in this case, as what he prayed for was essential to the very life and being of the Church, as well as for carrying on the glorious Building; it is all done—"not by *human nor angelic* might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts;" Zech. iv. 6.

The *Prayer*, the *Promise* of Christ fail! Alas, it is our faith that is weak; "*we* are not straitened in *him*, but in our own bowels;" there is as much Grace in the heart, as much Power in the hand, as much Faithfulness in the Word of Christ, now as ever, notwithstanding the alteration five or six thousand years may have made in the streams, it hath made none in the fountain—The "river of water of life, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb," is still as *clear*, as *pure*, as *deep*, as *full*, as ever.—And as to the *Promise* of Christ, the evangelical Prophet, or rather God himself, by the Prophet Isaiah, declares, in the strongest and most emphatical language,



language, to his own, his only-begotten, his well-beloved, his equal and eternal Son, as Mediator—  
 “ My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever ;” Isaiah lix. 21. And to the same purport, Christ himself asserts—“ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away ;” Matt. xxiv. 35. No ; they are as unchangeable and permanent as God himself—“ Not yea and nay, but yea and Amen ;” 2 Cor. i. 19, 20.—  
 “ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ;” Heb. xiii. 8.

There is but one thing more on this Head, that can possibly afford greater comfort to all the Ministers of Christ, than what hath been said already, and that is the Answer to this *Prayer*, the application of this *Promise*, the Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. At this glorious *Prayer* of Jesus Christ, let us pause awhile, and realize its vast and wonderful contents. This will serve to open and illustrate more fully the concern of the Spirit of Christ in *preaching*, and at the same time manifest, in

The third and last place, the transcendent excellency of this invaluable Gift and Blessing. Accordingly we shall *first* endeavour to fix our meditations upon this *Prayer* of Christ—“ I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ;” John xiv. 16.—Were we to enlarge upon this wonderful Passage, it would be natural for us to consider the following Truths, which evidently present themselves to our view.

The distinct Personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, expressed here in the words—*1—the Father—another Comforter.*—See John xv. 26.

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The relation of those Three Divine Persons to one another.

The relation they all bear to the Church of Christ.

The glorious harmony that subsists in the God-head, in the application of our Redemption.

The distinct particular Act, Work, and Office, here ascribed to each Divine Person—The FATHER *giving another Comforter*—the SON, in human nature, *praying* for this Gift—and the HOLY GHOST *coming*, and graciously taking up his residence in the Church to the end of the world.

But our present business and concern in this place is more especially with the *last* of these particulars—the *Coming* of the Holy Ghost, and his residence in the Church for ever. And as there is an inseparable connexion here between the glorious *end* designed, and the *means* made use of by this wonderful Person to obtain this *end*—the *abode* of the Holy Ghost in us—we shall briefly consider the whole Passage, the Prayer itself, as the *means*; and the Answer to it, as the *end*.

1st. The *Object* of this important part of Divine Worship, and the manner in which Christ expresses himself, in speaking of this *Object*. This hath a most surprising tendency to enlarge the hearts of all the Ministers and Churches of Christ, in love and affection to one another—"I will pray THE FATHER," saith the ever-blessed, kind, and compassionate Intercessour—not only "my Father and your Father, my God and your God;" but the common Father of all true believers—of all heaven-born souls, in past, present, and future ages. And,

2d. We should consider who it is that speaks—"I will pray the Father"—*I*, who am the "one, the only Mediator between God and men"—*I*, who am both God and man in one Person—perfectly able  
"to

to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24.) and prevail, with my heavenly Father for the communication of all spiritual blessings.

3d. Consider what Christ promises to do—"I will PRAY the Father"—I will be your *Advocate*—I will "appear in the Presence of God for you;" all the interest I have in Heaven shall be used and improved to your advantage. If there is any real value in my heart's blood, which I am soon going to pour out for you—if there be any thing precious in that soul, which I am now about to give an offering for your sins—if there be any real worth and true merit in my "*obedience* unto death, even the death of the Cross"—if there be any such thing as love and affection in the heart of God—you shall know, you shall enjoy it to your eternal comfort and advantage; and therefore let not my return home to my Palace and Throne of Glory trouble and distress you; I am not going there only upon my own account; I am going as your Forerunner, as your Head, as your Representative—"I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away"—My departure from this world is necessary. I have business of infinite importance to transact; such *business* as no other person can do; none on Earth, nor in Heaven, can be found equal to the Work; I must appear in Person myself, or it must be left undone for ever: But dry up your tears; it is business that above all concerns you; *you*, my mourning Disciples; *you*, my distressed Ministers; *you*, my infinitely-beloved Church. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you;" you may safely depend upon it—"I WILL pray the Father;" it is the first, the principal object I have in view; my heart is fixed upon it: I have been long already *offering*



up "strong crying and tears;" they have met with infinite approbation and acceptance from my heavenly Father; and now I am about to *offer up myself once for all*; and here I will work wonders indeed, such as shall fill all Heaven with eternal admiration, joy, and pleasure; and all Hell with everlasting terror and confusion. I have told you of my *love* in the Garden; your eyes shall see and behold my *love* on the Cross, and your hearts ere long feel my *love* on a Throne; a Priest upon a Throne, a tender-hearted, all compassionate, great High-Priest, upon a Throne for ever.

4th. The Blessing here promised, prayed for, and poured out upon the Church—"He shall give you another Comforter"—"HE shall give you another Comforter." God the Father is the Giver, he *sends* the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, in the name of Christ.

"He SHALL give you another Comforter;" it is not left at a peradventure—"He *may* give you another Comforter;" nor does it rest in mere probability, but it speaks the *certainty* of an answer to the Prayer of Christ. It not only signifies the Will of Father, Son, and Spirit, united, but their fixed determination to exert Omnipotent Power, to accomplish the "exceeding great and precious *Promise*."

"He shall give you another Comforter." The Spirit of Christ, as well as Christ himself, is a *gift*; not a common but a *special gift*: The Spirit is *given*, that we may know, and prize, and love, and enjoy Christ himself; and He was *given* for the sake of Jesus unto his poor broken-hearted Disciples in his room; and, as we find by the wonderful effects, more than compensated for the loss of his bodily Presence. Yea; and the same *gift* is absolutely necessary to enable us "to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." And although this is a *gift*, which we are altogether unworthy of, yet, blessed be God for Jesus Christ, he hath not *withheld* the one, and he hath promised he will not *deny* the other—he "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;" James i. 5.—"He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him;" Luke xi. 13. Yes; the Prayer of Christ draws Heaven and a World of Glory after it.

But let us consider the Persons to whom Christ said—"He will give You another Comforter;" You, my Disciples, to whom I am now speaking, and every one "which shall believe on me through *your word*" to the end of the world: John xvii. 20. All the Church of Christ, in Heaven and Earth, receive the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, from God the Father, by virtue of Christ's mediation and intercession.

Also let us consider the gift bestowed—"He shall give you ANOTHER COMFORTER." He hath already conferred upon you the Pearl of great Price, a gift of inconceivable, unspeakable, infinite value; he hath already freely parted with his own, his only-begotten, his well-beloved, equal and eternal Son, from his bosom; and I as willingly *give* myself for you, for all my Church; nor is it possible, that a greater gift can ever be bestowed, a greater blessing possessed; but *you* cannot understand the value of this Pearl, the beauty of him that "is altogether lovely," merely by seeing my face, and hearing my voice, in the flesh; nor really enjoy this greatest, sweetest, best of all blessings, without my Spirit; and therefore "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you ANOTHER COMFORTER." Mark the words—"ANOTHER COMFORTER;" that is, *another* Person to perform this delightful and important part of his Work. The FATHER is "the God of all COMFORT;" 2 Cor. i. 3.—CHRIST is "the CONSOLATION

of Israel ;" Luke ii. 25.—and the HOLY GHOST (in the Passage we are considering) is with great propriety stiled "ANOTHER COMFORTER," as distinguished in his Person, Promise and Office, though one in nature and essence with the FATHER and the SON. It is almost impossible not to see and admire here the glorious harmony that subsists in the Godhead, not only in the contrivance and execution, but particularly in the application of our Redemption.

"I will PRAY the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter."—Here is Christ, the Son of God, in human nature, as Mediator, interceding with his Father and our Father; the Father in a way of Justice, as well as Grace, Love, and Mercy answering his *Prayer*; and the Holy Ghost coming in his room: but there is something here in the Name and Office of this adorable Person that strenuously demands our attention; namely, "ANOTHER COMFORTER." He not only prepares the way, by *convincing* "the world of Sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgement," for true, spiritual, and eternal consolation; but makes an effectual application of Christ and all spiritual Blessings: In a few words, he begins, carries on, and brings all to perfection.

Likewise let us consider the *continuance* of this gift—it is *for ever*—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you FOR EVER." Christ's abode here was but short—two or three and thirty years; so that his Disciples then could not enjoy his bodily Presence all their lives; but the abode of the promised Spirit is not limited to thirty, forty, fifty, an hundred, or a thousand years: No; it is *for ever*.—This brings us to consider, as proposed,

Secondly. The *Promise* already brought in proof of the Subject in hand—"Lo, I am with you alway,



way, even unto the end of the world;" Matt. xxviii. 20.

1. That our souls, and all that is within us, may be deeply impressed with a sense of his Power, Grace, and Love, this *Promise* is ushered in with a note of attention and admiration—"LO! I am with you alway;" and no wonder, that such an "exceeding great and precious *Promise*" should here call for our everlasting Admiration; the heavenly grandeur and magnificence, the astonishing sublimity and infinite importance of the Subject, justly deserve and demand it: It is no mean, it is no vain thing; this is saying but little indeed! for our lives, our souls, our *salvation*, in time and eternity — *all* depend upon it.

2. We should consider *who* this glorious Personage is, that here promises us his Presence. The greater the Person, the greater the honour and favour bestowed in the enjoyment of his Presence. It is not a mere man, an earthly Potentate; nor an Angel, who stands in the Presence of God: No; It is "the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords"—it is "the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ"—it is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"—it is *he* "who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven, and in the Earth"—*He* who hath "a name above every name"—"Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"—*He* who is "the Desire of all Nations"—"the Chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely." This is that wonderful, adorable Person, whom the beloved Disciple *saw* "in the midst of the seven *golden* Candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right-hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right-hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hell and of Death"—“All Power in Heaven and in Earth;” Rev. i. 13—18.—Matt. xxviii. 18.

Here let us make a solemn pause, and learn believably to realize, admire, and adore the infinite love and condescension of the Divine Majesty. This may bring to our remembrance the devout exclamation of the wisest of men, used in his most fervent and effectual Prayer, at the dedication of the Temple. Methinks, a few moments meditation here will not be impertinent, nor altogether unprofitable; but serve to recruit and refresh us in our farther pursuit of the Subject.—“But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?” 2 Chron. vi. 18. 1 Kings viii. 27. Yes; Solomon, “in VERY DEED:” you know in reality, that he had done it before in the Tabernacle; and you were fully satisfied, that he would not desert his chosen people in the Temple; like Abraham, you might have looked forward to the Day of Christ, when God in our nature was actually to take up his abode here below; you told us, in your invaluable Writings, that his “delights were with the sons of men” (Prov. viii. 31.) and your Father, under the influence of the same Spirit, hath expressly declared, that when he “ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also,” for this very purpose, “that

“ that the Lord God might dwell among them ;”  
 Psalm lxxviii. 18. But you speak with wonder, and  
 you are too wise to wonder at little indifferent things ;  
 yet suffer me to say, your wisdom never led you so  
 far as to penetrate and comprehend the *depths* of  
 this condescension, which you so wisely and justly  
 admire. When you rose up to meet and bow to your  
 Mother, you gave “ honour to whom honour” was  
 due ; when you stoop to a beggar, you condescend  
 lower still ; but should you rise from your ivory  
 Throne, and lay aside your Crown of Gold—should  
 you freely leave your beloved City and Royal Palace  
 —should you bid adieu to your magnificent Court,  
 and take up your abode in the poorest cottage with  
 the meanest of your subjects ; your *self-denial*, your  
*condescension* would be great indeed !—And should the  
 love of mercy ever carry you so far, in favour of  
 capital offenders, rebels and enemies to your Person  
 and Government, when it was in your power, with-  
 out the least infringement upon law or justice, to  
 avenge yourself upon them—should it even carry  
 you so far as to bow the suppliant knee to invite,  
 entreat, and beseech those guilty criminals to accept  
 of pardon, to return to their allegiance, to receive  
 your Royal Favour, and a place in your Family for  
 ever, even when you had not the least need of their  
 persons or services ; nay, should your benevolence,  
 extended to the bounds of your enlarged heart—  
 should your Majesty, so highly offended, so justly  
 displeased, seal your affection with your blood, and  
 suffer and die to give them life and liberty—the  
 whole world might justly celebrate such clemency ; the  
 whole world resound your praises, and acknowledge,  
 that your disposition and character answered to the  
 meaning of your name—PEACEABLE.

But what would all this condescension be to the *conde-  
 scension* of the Most High God ; “ a greater, an infinitely  
 greater,



greater, than Solomon is here !" The most exalted of human or angelic beings can never so condescend ; but the *condescension* of God infinitely transcends *all*. When Gabriël, who stands in the Divine Presence, comes forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, he is then a servant of the servants, as well as of the brethren, the sons of his Lord : But when God himself *bows the Heavens, and comes down*—when he whom " the Heaven and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain"—when he who was " in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, makes himself of no reputation, takes upon him the form of a servant, is made in the likeness of man, and is found in fashion as a man, *bumbles* himself, and becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross !" This is stupendous Love and infinite *Condescension* indeed ! which appears the more *amazing*, as the objects thereof are not only poor and helpless, but the worst of rebels and enemies, who have unlawfully taken up arms against their lawful Sovereign, the Majesty of Heaven—It is for those who deserve to die without mercy : Yes ; for this very purpose, that we might be *delivered from going* " down to the pit ;" redeemed and reconciled unto God ; adopted into his Family ; justified, sanctified, and " saved with an everlasting Salvation : " In a word, that he who " is exalted above all blessing and praise," independent of our persons or services, might "*raise such poor worms as we are out of the dust, and lift up such beggars from the dunghill, to set them among Princes, and make them inherit the Throne of Glory.*" —O Solomon ! what Love ! what Grace ! what Mercy ! what astonishing *condescension* is here !—We wonder—we admire—we adore with you—we call upon every thing that hath breath devoutly to join in your solemn exclamation—" Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth !" —But to return from this digression,

gression, or rather to come more closely to the Subject in hand, we would not entirely overlook,

3. The *manner* in which Christ speaks.—The Promise is not thus expressed—I *was*, or I *will be* with you ; but—"Lo, I AM with you"—at present ; as if he had said—I give you more than a mere Promise ; I intend to fill your souls with an abiding sense of the invaluable Blessing, that awaits all those who believe the Promise, and obey the Precept ; I mean to shew my readiness alway to accompany you in the way of mine own appointments.—But,

4. We should consider the Promise itself—"Lo, I am WITH YOU." It is true, this wonderful Person, as to his human nature, hath long since *ascended*, and "sat down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3. xii. 2.)—*the Heavens have received him*, "until the times of restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21.)—yet his gracious and Divine *Presence* is not confined to those blessed Inhabitants (2 Chron. vi. 18. Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2. Psalm lxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 8, 9, 10.) and therefore the glorified Mediator in effect now says—"Lo, I am WITH YOU." My being with my heavenly Father and the holy and eternal Spirit—My favouring the "innumerable company of *Saints and Angels*" above with my *Presence*, shall not hinder you of its enjoyment here below ; so far from it, that even, upon this very account of my exaltation, you shall enjoy more of my gracious and spiritual *Presence* than ever : I am able at the same time to fill both Heaven and Earth with my Glory!—By the way, what an astonishing proof arises out of this Text of the true and proper Divinity of Jesus Christ!—Oh ! who can comprehend, unfold, or express, all that is contained in the Word!—"Lo, I am WITH YOU :"—Surely it cannot mean, that he is with us as a mere spectator, or stands neuter, when his Ministers are employed in the blessed

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Work :

Work: No; it is his own glorious cause.—The Promise speaks his gracious design of close and intimate friendship and communication with them—his kind and tender affection for them—his willingness and readiness to put forth his strength, and exert his power, in their behalf—to make known his mind and will, and assist them in the performance of their work—to counsel and direct them in all their difficulties—to comfort them in all their tribulations and afflictions—to supply all their wants—to protect and defend them from all their spiritual enemies—and finally, to preserve *every one of them* “unto his heavenly Kingdom.”—This appears to be the true sense and meaning of the phrase—“WITH YOU.”

But although this *Promise* was originally, principally, and directly given to all the Ministers of the Gospel (and as such it hath been hitherto considered) yet, as all the Churches of Christ stand in absolute need of the same gracious and spiritual Promise, as essential to the very being of Christianity, and as Christ himself hath made for substance the same Promise to them, in Matt. xviii. 20.—“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”—we do not mean to confine it entirely to Ministers, especially as the Lord’s Presence and Blessing attending and succeeding their labours makes the *Promise* to terminate in the Church itself. Permit us then to view the *Promise* a few moments in a greater latitude—“Lo, I am WITH you” is “a Word in Season,” exactly suited, and wonderfully adapted, to all the spiritual wants and desires of an immortal soul. Christ here in effect furnishes his Churches and Ministers with a comprehensive Answer to all the objections, doubts and difficulties, which may ever arise. All the spiritual life, light, liberty, holiness, and happiness, which have been experienced in the Church Militant for almost



almost six thousand years; all the beauty and glory of the Church till time shall be no more; and all the blessedness of the Church triumphant in the eternal world; arise from such a word as this—"Lo, I am WITH you alway, even unto the end of the world." Many other gracious Promises are already fulfilled, and will be accomplished at death and judgment; but the contents, the substance of this Promise, will be eternally experienced—"Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8.) so that neither the end of the world, nor the judgment of the Great Day, can put a period to this Promise: No; the Churches and Ministers of Christ shall enjoy the same in a more full, perfect, and sublime manner; not only his gracious and spiritual, but his bodily Presence; they shall see him no more "through a glass darkly, but face to face"—"see him as he is"—"behold his Glory"—in a word—"ever be with the Lord:" 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 John iii. 2. John xvii. 24. 1 Theff. iv. 17.

Come then, my soul, let us make one effort more to derive some spiritual good out of the fulness and suitableness of this great Promise, to the state and circumstances of the Ministers and Churches of Christ in the present world. The Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls here in effect says—Count up every thing you want, and be very attentive to what I say; whatever I promise in my Word, I will perform by my Spirit.

Are you ignorant? Behold, "I am WITH you"—to "give *you* understanding in all things;" 2 Tim. ii. 7.

Do you find clouds and darkness over-spreading your souls? Behold, "I am WITH you"—"a light to lighten the Gentiles;" Luke ii. 32.

Are you weak? Behold, "I am WITH you"—I am "the strength of Israel"—"the Lord thy God in

the midst of thee is mighty :” 1 Sam. xv. 29. Joel iii. 16. Zeph. iii. 17.

Are you sick and wounded ? Behold, I am your Physician—“ the Lord that healeth thee ;” Exod. xv. 26.

Are you in great tribulation ? Behold, “ I am WITH YOU”—“ a very present help in trouble ;” Psalm xlv. 1.

Are you beset by strong temptations ? Behold, “ I am WITH YOU”—“ *I know* how to deliver *you* out of temptations”—I was not only “ in all points tempted like as *you* are”—I am not only “ able to succour them that are tempted”—but I “ will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it :” 2 Pet. ii. 9. Heb. iv. 15. ii. 18. 1 Cor. x. 13.

Are you like Noah’s Dove, that could find “ no rest for the sole of her foot ?” (Gen. viii. 9.) Behold, “ I am WITH YOU”—“ My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest ;” Exod. xxxiii. 14.

Have you lost my comfortable Presence, and crying out—“ The Lord hath forsaken *me* ?” (Judges vi. 13.)—“ Oh ! that I knew where I might find him !” (Job xxiii. 3.) Behold, “ I am WITH YOU”—“ for a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy  
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on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones;"—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee:" Isaiah liv. 7—12. Heb. xiii. 5.

Doth the world hate and persecute you? Behold, "I am WITH YOU"—"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33.) and will overcome the world in you; "Believe in me," and victory triumphant follows.

Doth indwelling sin threaten your ruin? Behold, "I am WITH YOU"—"There is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness"—"*My blood cleanseth from all sin*"—*Wash, wash, constantly wash here, and be for ever clean*; Zech. xiii. 1. 1 John i. 7. Isa. i. 16.

Are your souls hungry and thirsty? "I will satiate *them* with fatness"—Behold, "I am WITH YOU"—I am "the bread which cometh down from Heaven"—"the bread *and water* of life"—In me you shall have "a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined:" Jer. xxxi. 14. John vi. 50. iv. 14. vi. 48. Isaiah xxv. 6.

Are all your enemies busy in contriving your destruction? Behold, "I am WITH YOU"—"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;" Isaiah liv. 17.

Are you surrounded with enemies? Behold, "I am WITH YOU"—As "a Wall of fire"—"a Leader and Commander"—"the Captain of Salvation"—I *come*, "glorious in *mine* apparel, travelling in the greatness of *my* strength," for your relief.—"Mine own arm *wrought* Salvation" *for* you; "mine own arm *wrought* Salvation" *in* you; "mine own arm" shall now *enable* you to "work out your own Salvation,"



vation," through all the dangers which lie in the way to the Kingdom, and make you also the highly-favoured, honoured instruments of the *Salvation* of those that *bear* you : Zech ii. 5. Isaiah lv. 4. Heb. ii. 10. Isaiah lxiii. 1—5. Phil. ii. 12, 13. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

In a word—"I am WITH you," my People and Ministers, in all states and conditions : I was *present* with the three Hebrews in the *burning fiery furnace* ; Joseph in the *pit* ; Jeremiah in the *dungeon* ; Daniel in the *lion's den* ; Peter, Paul, and Silas, in their *prisons* ; and I *will* be — "I am WITH you" to succeed and bless all your endeavours, for promoting my Glory and the good of my Church. "Lo, I am WITH you" at all times ; but more especially when you are engaged in my cause, in *preaching* my glorious Gospel, and administering its heavenly ordinances. Isaiah xliii. 2, 5. Dan. iii. 23, 24, 25. Gen. xxxvii. 23—28. Jer. i. 8. xxxviii. 13. Lam. iii. 55—58. Dan. vi. 22, 23. Acts xii. 5—11. xvi. 25, 26. Chron. xvi. 27.

And now let the most copious imagination be extended to the utmost bounds — let the most eloquent tongue that ever was *touched* with "a live coal from off the Altar" be employed — the thousandth part could not be known ; the thousandth part could not be told ; the *Presence* of Christ is Heaven here upon Earth below ; and the *Presence* of Christ makes Heaven in the Heaven of Heavens above—"In his *Presence* is fulness of joy, and at his right-hand there are pleasures for evermore ;" Psalm xvi. 11.—But,

5. We should particularly consider the *Persons* to whom the *Promise* is made—these will be found to be—all Christ's true Disciples and Ministers—"Lo, I am with you" my Disciples, to whom I am now speaking, as long as you live in *this* world ; and when "absent from the body," you shall enjoy my *Presence* in the *eternal* world : And what I say unto you,

you, I say to all my Ministers and Churches; though some may enjoy more of my gracious *Presence* and the Light of my Countenance than others (Eph. iv. 7.) as the natural Sun shineth brighter and warmer in some Seasons and Climates than others, and yet there is nothing hid from the heat thereof; so it hath been, so it is, and ever shall be in this case—Not one of my Disciples, not one of my Ministers, who shall be found obedient to my precepts, shall ever fail of my *Presence*: 1 Cor. xii. 13. Mal. iv. 2. Acts ix. 31. —This brings us,

Lastly. To consider the duration or continuance of the Divine favour and blessing: It is here said to be *always*—"Lo, I am with you *ALWAYS*, even unto the end of the world;" not only "with you" to the end of your lives, but with *ALL* that shall succeed you in your Office to the *end of time*. I will not be "as a way-faring man, that *tarrieth only* for a night;" but "if a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"—"*ALWAYS*, even unto the end of the world:" John xiv. 23. The same Spirit that rested upon me (Isaiah xi. 2. Luke iv. 18.) the same Spirit, that I poured down from on high to *teach* my Disciples "all things, and bring all things to *their* remembrance"—to "guide *them* into all truth" (John xiv. 26. xvi. 13.) that was needful for them to know, or speak, or write, either for their own Salvation, or the Salvation of my redeemed Church and People, in all future ages—*That same Spirit* I promise, *that same Spirit* I will bestow upon all my faithful Ministers—not to *teach* them any thing more or above what is contained in Scripture:—No; "the Law of the Lord is perfect" (Psalm xix. 7.)—I am jealous of the honour of my *word*—I have "magnified *it* above all *my* name" (Psalm cxxxviii. 2.)—but to "glorify me"—to "take of mine, and shew it unto *them*" (John xvi. 14, 15.)—to *open* their

their eyes, and *affect* their hearts, with the nature, necessity, excellency, dignity, and transcendent Glory of the wonderful things which are already revealed.—In a word, to draw forth all their powers, gifts, graces, and heaven-born Dispositions, into the most lively and vigorous exercise; and before they are *aware to make their souls* “like the chariots of Amindab”—to *set* their hearts at liberty—to *indite a good matter*; and to make their tongues as “the pen of a ready writer;” that they may shew to their Hearers how Christ excels in Wisdom, Love, Power, Beauty, Glory, and Majesty. In other words, the sum of all is this — The same Divine Being that hath given us the Holy Spirit for our rule and pattern (1 Chron. xxviii. 12.) in the composition of all our Discourses, gives us “understanding in all things” (2 Tim. ii. 7.)—causes us to *understand the Pattern* (Exod. xxv. 40. 1 Chron. xxviii. 19.)—enables us, like Elihu and David, to *indite a good matter* (Job xxxii. 18. Psalm xlv. 1.)—prepares our hearts, and instructs us to order, dispose, and arrange our thoughts, in a right method—not only teaches us to *discern those that differ*, and pass a *right judgment* between truth and error, good and evil, sin and duty; but also to distinguish between one truth and part of God’s Word and another; to *esteem chiefly* those “things that are *most* excellent” (Phil. i. 10.) and, as God is the God of Order, to dispose them accordingly.—He also *brings to our remembrance*, not only the *things*, but the *words*, “which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (John xiv. 26. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.)—those acceptable, or pure, plain, proper, significant, instructive, beautiful, affecting, and surprising figures and forms of expressions, which have so justly and deservedly been admired, by the greatest and best of men, in all ages of the world—and enables us to “speak as *we* ought to speak”—to “speak as the Oracles of God;” Eph. vi. 20. 1 Pet. iv. 11.

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This would naturally lead us to what is proposed to be handled in the next Chapter; namely, to *open and illustrate the blessed effects*, or to consider distinctly those Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, which are more especially to be exercised in the Ministry of the Word. But it is time to pause, and carefully survey the ground that we have already passed over.—We have opened the *peculiar Nature*—proved the *indispensable Necessity*—manifested the *Truth and Reality*—and displayed the *transcendent Excellency* of this BLESSING. And now what remains, but that we should be deeply concerned in reading, studying, and searching the Scriptures; frequently exercising ourselves in meditation and prayer, in order to obtain this BLESSING; careful not to *quench* or *grieve* the Spirit, either by *denying* or *abusing* the heavenly Doctrine—and be filled with pity and compassion for all those who are *destitute* of this important, this *all-important* BLESSING. See Exod. xxxv. 21. Numb. xi. 26. 2 Kings ii. 9, 15. 1 Sam. xix. 20. Isaiah xxxii. 15. Dan. v. 12. Acts ii. 18. Rev. xi. 11. Acts ii. 4. xviii. 25. Rom. viii. 26. Phil. i. 19. Eph. iv. 30. 1 Thess. v. 19. 1 John iii. 24. 1 John iii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

But before we close this Chapter, be it observed, that the Spirit of God, at one time or another, in a greater or less degree, graciously assists the Ministers of Christ in the *Matter, Method, Language, and Delivery* of their *Discourses*.

As to the MATTER—the Holy Spirit hath not only given us the Word for our Rule and Pattern, but instructs us in the knowledge of this *Pattern*—gives us “understanding in all things;” not only as men and Christians, but as Ministers.

As to the METHOD—the same Divine Spirit, that in the first creation brought out of a confused chaos the most lovely and beautiful order, and disposes

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every thing in the soul of man, prepares and arranges the thoughts of a Minister of Christ:—"The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord;" Prov. xvi. 1.

As to the LANGUAGE and Expression—when the heart of a Preacher, like Elihu, is "full of good matter" (Job xxxii. 18.)—when the soul is favoured by the Divine Spirit—the mouth is full of the best and most *acceptable words*.

As to the DELIVERY—the Holy Spirit gives a *door of utterance*; not only makes his Ministers *able*, but *apt to teach*—gives all that freedom, liberty, boldness, solemnity, zeal and courage, which become the weighty and important things, in which they are concerned.

From all these views, as well as from what will be remarked in the next Chapter; the transcendent excellency and absolute necessity of the Influences of the Holy Ghost are abundantly evident.

## C H A P. IX.

## ON THE SPIRIT OF PREACHING.

*The blessed Effects of Divine Influence are a suitable Temper and Disposition of Mind, agreeable to the Precepts and Examples of Christ, his Apostles and Prophets---wherein is considered the Exercise of all those Divine Gifts and Graces, which are proper to the Work---As a meek and humble Spirit---A bold and valiant Spirit---A sincere and faithful Spirit---A wise and prudent Spirit---A diligent and laborious Spirit---A zealous and fervent Spirit---A grave and serious Spirit---The Whole of this Discourse summed up in one Word---LOVE.*

**W**E are now to treat in this Chapter of the best, the only companions which a Minister of Christ can bring into the Pulpit, to please God and profit the souls of men; and though sometimes one, and sometimes another, according to the nature of the Subject and the circumstances of the auditory, is more necessary, yet they all perfectly agree together; we shall therefore give a particular description of each, and begin with;

I. *A meek and humble Spirit.*—This is not only of absolute necessity for our enjoyment of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. v. 3, 5.) and essential to the due performance of all that God requires of us, and the exercise of every Grace of his Spirit; but enters particularly into the life and soul of the Ministry. Hence, when the Apostle pointed out to Timothy the Qualification of a Bishop, he forbade the choice of a



*Novice*, with this awful reason annexed—“left, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil;” 1 Tim. iii. 6.—and Tit. i. 7. “not soon angry.” The greater the work, the more need of *humility* and *meekness* to perform it aright.

But it is not the mere being or existence of this blessed temper, nor its operations in general, that are now intended, but its acts and exercises, more especially in the Ministry of the Word. The Apostle *served* “the Lord with all humility of mind,” in *preaching*, as well as every other ordinance; Acts xx. 18, 19. When a Minister enters the *Pulpit*, he stands in the more immediate Presence and Place of the Divine Majesty, before whom “all nations of the Earth are as nothing, less than nothing, and vanity” (Isaiah xl. 17.)—in whose *Presence*, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of Cherubims and Seraphims veil and cover their faces; Isaiah vi. 1, 2.—In the *Presence* of that great and adorable Being, “who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven” (Psalm cxiii. 6.)—who “is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Neh. ix. 5.)—of that wonderful and every way glorious Person, who “humbled himself, and became obedient unto death” (Phil. ii. 8.) to “deliver us from going down to the pit” (Job xxxiii. 24, 28.)—and to give us a title and *meetness* for everlasting life (Col. i. 12.)—who, in the whole scene of his Ministry, hath left us such an example of *meekness* and *lowliness* of heart as should confound our pride for ever—“Learn of me (saith the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls) for I am meek and lowly in heart;” Matt. xi. 29. This is a lesson of infinite importance; a *lesson*, which, to understand and practise thoroughly, will take up all our lives and all our time.

“Humility of MIND;” Acts xx. 19.—The Mind is the proper receptacle for every Grace. God looketh

looketh at the heart, which is by nature the dreadful seat of *pride*, and every other sin (Gen. vi. 5. Mark vii. 21, 22, 23.) like fallen Babylon—"the hold of every foul Spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. xviii. 2.) but when renewed by the Spirit of God (for true *meekness* and *humility* are fruits of the Spirit) it then becomes the blessed seat of all *humility*, and every other Grace. *Humility* in "the hidden man of the heart" is (to use the phrase of the Apostle, in 1 Pet. iii. 4.) the Clothes, the Dress, the Ornaments of the Heaven-born Soul; herewith it makes a beautiful and grand appearance; not indeed in the eyes of the men of this world; no; (they can see "no form nor comeliness" in this heavenly disposition, "that *they* should desire *it*," any more than in its adorable Author, and our great Exemplar) *but* in the eyes of the wisest, holiest, and best of mankind, who "have their senses exercised to discern" spiritual things: nay; in the sight of God himself—his eye and his heart are upon the *humble* person; here he beholds his own image; "this is the man whom the King delighteth to honour" with his company for ever.

But *Humility* is a Conversation Garment, an excellent Pulpit Garment, which must never be put off. Suffer us here to be more particular. The Minister of Christ, as far as he is *humble*, is one who hath felt the power and efficacy of those heavenly *weapons* which he uses in his warfare; he has found them "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. He knows, and therefore doth not overvalue himself, nor despise others; no; his eyes are open—a sense of his own vileness—his utter unworthiness of any mercy—his entire insufficiency for any thing spiritual, without

without the help of his God—his own unprofitableness, even after all that he hath done, as in the sight of the Divine Majesty, make him loathe and abhor himself. He hath found his own “heart deceitful above all things,” and dares not *trust* it. He knows by experience the weakness of his own understanding to discern spiritual things, without spiritual light; and therefore doth not *lean* to it. He “*ceaseth* from *his own wisdom*.”

The humble Minister doth not set up his reason in opposition to Divine Revelation, nor intrude into those things which are not found in the Holy Scripture. Here he finds a sufficiency for every spiritual and Divine purpose — enough to make “the man of God perfect, and thoroughly *furnish him* unto all good works”—enough to make himself and his Hearers *wise unto Salvation*; and here he rests satisfied, and is thankful; — all his faculties bow to Divine Revelation. — In a word, his “soul is as a weaned child;” Psalm cxxxi. 2.

His great concern is ever to abase himself—exalt his Redeemer—glorify his God—magnify his Office—and by all means to promote the Salvation of his Hearers: Psalm xxxiv. 2.

He cannot bear the thoughts of *lording it over God's heritage*; nor doth he desire, like *Diotrephes*, “to have the pre-eminence;” or affect *dominion* over the persons, or consciences, or faith of his Hearers; he is satisfied with the “authority which the Lord hath given *him*,” and is chiefly concerned to use it for their “good to edification.” He is a stranger, an enemy to “great swelling words of vanity.” He neither speaks in his own praise, nor doth he desire that others should think him better than he really is.

If the Priests of Jupiter offer to do sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul, *Humility*, deep, heart humility, and



and intense zeal for the Glory of God, shall unite, earnestly, ardently *unite*, in preventing the detested, dreadful, idolatrous purpose—their souls will rise with holy indignation—you shall see them all concern, trouble, distress, anger, and heavenly resentment; tearing, rending their clothes; running in among the people, and hear them vehemently crying out, as they run—“Sirs, why do ye these things?” We are not gods, but men—“men of like passions with you:” We are not objects of religious worship; we have no right, we make no claim; nay, we hate, detest, and abhor such a conduct; we cannot bear the thoughts of receiving Divine honours; our business is to undeceive you, to point you to the right, the only object; we “preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the Living God, which made Heaven, and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein;” Acts xiv. 13, 14, 15.

Although Paul was in nothing “behind the very chief Apostles,” yet he was nothing in his own apprehension; though he “laboured more abundantly than they all,” still he had the lowest thoughts of himself, and was equal to every one of them in *humility*; freely ascribing all that he was, and had, and did, as a man, as a Christian, as a Minister, as an Apostle, to the Grace of God;—“less than the least of all Saints” were the highest thoughts this eminent Believer could entertain of himself; like his Divine Master, who, though he was Lord of All, “yet made *himself* servant unto all;” 1 Cor. ix. 19. It was his desire, it was his study, his earnest endeavour, to “please all men in all things (for *their* good to edification) not seeking *his* own profit, but the profit of many, that they *might* be saved;” 1 Cor. x. 33. Rom. xv. 2. Paul was a man of a publick spirit, and lived and spent himself for the spiritual and eternal advantage of mankind.

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His soul was *humble*, and therefore too great to lay much stress upon little indifferent matters : here he was all compliance in whatever might be done, or left undone, without offending his God, as far as it might in any respect conduce to the real good of any of his Hearers ; in this he was as pliant as an Osier ; whilst, in all things which God had revealed and commanded in his Word for the faith and practice of his Church, he stood firm as an oak, as “an iron pillar, or as brasen walls”—he had learned of his blessed Master to “condescend to men of low estate”—to adapt himself to the meanest capacity. He was *gentle unto all men*—“in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.” He very well knew, that the meekness of Christ was a most weighty and wonderful argument in persuasion, and therefore was all concern and diligence to get the most exact and perfect copy of it in himself, in order to receive from Christ, and communicate to his Church, all Divine information and instruction. (Observe 2 Cor. x. 1. Psalm xxv. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 25. James i. 21. Gal. vi. 1.) This is *humility*, and these are some of its actings, more or less, in all the Ministers of Christ.

Would we then resemble all the best Preachers in Heaven and Earth ?—Would we be like the Angels ; nay, like Christ, like God himself ? (Matt. xi. 29. Psalm cxiii. 6.)—Would we enjoy communion with him, and all the Blessings of the Gospel, to the *satisfying* of our souls ? (Isaiah lvii. 15. Psalm xxii. 26. Isaiah xxix. 19.)—Would we be really *exalted* to “riches, honour, and life ?” (Matt. xviii. 4. Luke xiv. 11. James iv. 10. 1 Peter iii. 4, 5. Prov. xxii. 4.)—In a word, would we have all Grace here, and all Glory hereafter ? (James iv. 6. 1 Peter v. 5.)—We must be *humble*, and, like the Apostle, *serve the Lord*

Lord in the Gospel Ministry, "with all humility of mind;" Acts xx. 19.

II. *A bold and valiant Spirit.*—The *boldness* of the Lion, as well as the *meekness* of the Lamb, is necessary in the Ministry of the Word. The greatest fortitude and magnanimity are not in the least incompatible or inconsistent with the most profound *humility*; they are excellent associates, and are of infinite importance to a Christian, but above all to a Minister. — "The Lamb in the midst of the Throne," and "the Lion of the Tribe of Juda," meet in the same adorable Person. See Rev. v. 5, 6.

*A bold and valiant Spirit* is not contrary to any other Grace, but to an undue fear, shame, and cowardice, in the cause and interest of Christianity; and cowardice is dishonourable to the Captain of Salvation, and altogether unbecoming Soldiers; it strengthens the hands of the enemies, and gives the Prince of Darkness at their head cause to rejoice and triumph.

Ministers are "set for the defence of the Gospel" (Phil. i. 17.) and therefore need, like Paul and Apollos, to speak the Word *with all boldness and confidence*: Acts xviii. 26. xxviii. 31. ix. 23. They may, with great propriety, be called the Life-guards of the Church, the Body of Christ; they watch for souls, and therefore ought to be all *valiant men* "of the valiant of Israel; who hold swords, and are expert in *their heavenly war*;" Cant. iii. 7, 8. Both the Old and New Testament abound with the most important precepts—the most glorious examples—the most precious promises—the most tremendous threatenings—the most suitable means—and the most powerful motives, on this Head. — *Precepts*, which shew the same to be the "good, acceptable, and perfect Will of God"—*Examples*, which set forth the practicableness—*Promises*, to work upon our hopes—*Threatenings*, to alarm our fears—*Means*, to

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obtain the blessings—and *Motives*, to affect our hearts, and stir up, excite, and inspire us with an holy, undaunted courage; all which should be carefully attended to, by every Minister of Jesus Christ, who would “war a good warfare”—of these things we shall not here speak particularly. But we cannot dismiss this important Subject without mentioning a few passages, some of which respect the Church in general, and others are more especially directed to the Ministers of Christ.—

“I, even I am he that comforteth you: Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the Son of Man which shall be made as grass? And forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the foundations of the Earth?” Isaiah li. 12, 13.—“Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto all them that I command thee: Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For behold, I have made thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls;” Jer. i. 8, 17, 18.—“And thou, Son of Man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among Scorpions: Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.”—“Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house;” Ezek. ii. 6, 7. iii. 8, 9.—“Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him

him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven"—"before the Angels of God:" Matt. x. 32, 33. Luke xii. 8, 9.—"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels;" Mark viii. 38.

And is there not a cause for all this *boldness*? Are not the enemies of Christ the enemies of his Church, the enemies of our Salvation, and the enemies of the glorious Gospel, which is committed to our trust, *bold* in their resistance and rebellion? And why then should not the Minister of Christ be *bold* and *valiant*? If the greatest and best of causes—the interest of "the Great God, and our Saviour"—against all our spiritual enemies—if the best of Kings and Captains, the King of Glory, the Captain of Salvation—if the best of weapons—"the whole armour of God"—gifts and graces—but above all *the sword, the two-edged sword of the Spirit*, which went out of Christ's *mouth*—if the best of counsel, how to use those heavenly arms, to *teach* effectually, *teach* our "hands to war, and *our* fingers to fight"—if the best provision that Heaven can make, the *supply of all our need*, the *all-sufficient Grace* of Christ—if the greatest success, and reward of "Glory, Honour, Immortality, *and* Eternal Life;" the Salvation of our *own* souls, and of those who *bear* us—if any, or all these put together, have a tendency to move and stir us up to "fight the Lord's battles" *valiantly*, they are all united.—These are the MOTIVES to excite a *bold and valiant Spirit*.

With respect to the Means to be used—Would we be made the happy partakers of this Christ-like Spirit, so as to be "in nothing terrified by *our* adversaries," but "*set our faces like a flint*"—let us remember,

member, that it is not mere natural courage and fortitude, which will bear us out against our spiritual enemies : No ;—" even the youths shall faint and be weary" (Isaiah xl. 30.) we must obtain it the same way, and use the same methods, which the Prophets and Apostles did ; namely, communion with the Captain of Salvation, and fervent and importunate prayer ; nor should we forget to engage the Church in the same delightful duty on our behalf ; Eph. vi. 18, 19, 20.

Whence the astonishing *boldness* of Peter and John, in the most admirable and successful Discourses, which they preached in the Temple ? Who inspired them with such undaunted courage and heavenly magnanimity ? O Sirs ! " they had been with Jesus" (Acts iv. 13.) Yes ; and Jesus was also with them ; or else we should never have heard of such wonderful courage, and wonderful conquest. Not to mention the holy indifference, the heavenly composure, the Divine tranquillity, the immoveable faith and resolution of the Three Children (*i. e.* the three Champions) when presented with " the burning, fiery furnace" (Dan. iii. 16—18.) nor the *Band of Witnesses*, " the noble army of Martyrs"—nor the *boldness* of Paul in those unparalleled speeches in Acts xx. 24. xxi. 13. when, though susceptible of the tenderest feelings of nature, yet, like a man crucified, and dead to bonds, afflictions, and all the sufferings of this present life, he remains fixed and unmoveable, setting no value upon the most precious, temporal blessing, not *counting even his life dear unto himself* ; nay, ready and willing to lay it down at the pleasure of his Lord. Was ever a heart more dead to the world ? Was ever a heart more live to God ? Was ever a heart more in love with Jesus ? Was there ever more concern and affection felt for the success of the Gospel Ministry ? Whence all this ? He had " been with Jesus"—



Jesus"—“for *him* to live *was* Christ, and to die *was* gain;” Phil. i. 21.

The Apostles were earnest, and importunate in prayer for this blessing—“Lord, grant unto thy Servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy Word; by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy Child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness”—and entreated the Church to pray for them: Acts iv. 29, 30, 31. 2 Thess. iii. 1. Eph. vi. 19, 20. Would we possess and exercise this *bold and valiant Spirit*? Would we obey the important *Precept*? Would we enjoy the *Promise*? Would we avoid the dreadful *Threatenings* made to those who are ashamed of Christ and his Gospel? Would we be affected with the *Motives*?—We must use the MEANS, we must convert all into PRAYER.

III. *A sincere and faithful Spirit*.—No Grace of the Divine Spirit can exist—no duty in Religion can be rightly performed—no ordinance of Divine Worship duly administered, without *Godly Sincerity*. By *Sincerity* in preaching the Gospel is not meant so much a particular Grace of the Spirit, as the essence, the reality of every Grace. *A sincere Spirit* is a Spirit that is right in the sight of God; a singleness and integrity of heart; an utter avowed enemy to deceit, flattery, and hypocrisy.

A *faithful Minister* of Christ is one who impartially declares “all the counsel of God” to every one of his Hearers, without concealing any part that is profitable to their souls; one, who makes a conscience of dealing with them as in the sight and presence of his Divine Master. Such is the trust, the *great and important* trust, which is committed to the  
Ministers

Ministers of Christ, as renders *a sincere and faithful Spirit* absolutely necessary. Accordingly the Apostle Paul charges Timothy to *commit the things, which he had heard of him*, "to faithful men, who *should* be able to teach others also;" 2 Tim. ii. 2. The Word and Gospel of the blessed God, which he hath "magnified above all *his* name" (Psalm cxxxviii. 2.)—the worship of God, which is absolutely necessary to glorify and enjoy him for ever—and "the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28.) is a trust, a most weighty and important *trust*, which is also committed to *all* "the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries" and "manifold Grace of God;" and "it is required in Stewards, that a man be found faithful;" 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. 1 Pet. iv. 10.—"He that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully;" Jer. xxiii. 28. We must be *faithful* to Christ and the souls of our Hearers, if we would have the approbation of our Judge, and be "pure from the blood of all men." We must "so speak; not as pleasing men (any farther than for their "good to edification;" Rom. xv. 2.) but God, which trieth our hearts." This should be our great, our highest ambition, to please him, and to profit the souls of our Hearers (1 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 5.) "Not handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" 2 Cor. iv. 2. Job xxxii. 21. 1 Tim. v. 21. This was the true spirit and temper of Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles—"Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant; but Christ as a Son over his own house" (Heb. iii. 5, 6.) "Faithfulness *was* the girdle of his reins" (Isaiah xi. 5.) he *never concealed* the "loving kindness and truth of his heavenly Father from the great congregation" (Psalm xl. 10.) all things which he heard of

of him he made known to his Disciples ; he gave them the words which God the Father gave him as Mediator (John xvii. 8.) he left no part of his work unfinished, left nothing unsaid that ought to be said. Here we have a most perfect and glorious example—*Sincerity* and *Faithfulness* itself — the Glory of God — the honour of his Word—and the happiness of his Church, were always in his view.

This most excellent and Christ-like *Spirit* is particularly mentioned in the New Testament. Hence we read of "Tychicus, a faithful Minister in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 21.) of "Epaphras, a faithful Minister of Christ" (Col. i. 7.) of "Timotheus, who was faithful in the Lord" (1 Cor. iv. 17.) of "Sylvanus, a faithful brother" (1 Peter v. 12.) and of Paul, in one of the most affecting speeches, that ever was uttered, solemnly appealing to the Church of Ephesus, that he was "pure from the blood of all men. For I (saith the Apostle) have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God ;" Acts xx. 26, 27. Happy Paul ! blessed for ever is the Minister who can in deed and in truth unite in the same language ! The Apostle seems to allude to, or rather take his speech here, *from* that tremendous and glorious passage in Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9.—"O Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore thou shalt hear the Word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die ; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it ; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul." It is utterly impossible to conceive any judgment more terrible, or mercy more comfortable.—"A wonderful and horrible



rible thing is committed in the land. The Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their means; and my People love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. v. 30, 31. vi. 14. viii. 2. On the other hand, what a mercy, what a favour, what an honour, is it to be *faithful*! The great Apostle viewed it so, and humbly acknowledged that he "obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful" (1 Cor. vii. 25.) and *thanks* his Divine Master for *counting* (i. e. for making, keeping, and approving) him *faithful*; 1 Tim. i. 12. Hence a *sincere and faithful Spirit* evidently appears to come from God, and resembles him—it is "Godly sincerity;" 2 Cor. i. 12.—Oh! what prayer can be more necessary than the inspired Penman's—"Let integrity and uprightness preserve me;" Psalm xxv. 21. Would we deliver our own souls, and take the most likely way to deliver those that hear us? Would we have the approbation of our Judge—the comfort of a peaceable conscience—the joy of our Lord—in a word, the Crown of Life? We must continue to be *sincere and faithful* Stewards, Witnesses, Messengers, Ministers, and Ambassadors of Jesus Christ.—"Be thou FAITHFUL unto death (saith the adorable Redeemer) and I will give thee a Crown of Life;" Prov. xiii. 17. Jer. xxiii. 22. Matt. xxv. 21. Luke xii. 42. Rev. ii. 10.

IV. *A wise and prudent Spirit*.—This is very useful and necessary in all affairs of any moment and consequence; but chiefly in the great business of Religion. The more important the Work, the more need of *wisdom* to handle it in a proper manner. No duty, office, or ordinance of Divine Service, can be rightly attended to, without *wisdom*, especially "the Work of the Ministry;" for this reason, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls exhorts his Disciples to "be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt.

(Matt. x. 16.) whilst, after the example of their Divine Master, they were going "about doing good" to the souls and bodies of others, they might not neglect their own, but use every innocent and lawful means to guard, defend, and preserve both from injury. *Wisdom* and *prudence* are some of the most useful and valuable companions of true Religion in general, and of all other gifts and graces: Psalm cxii. 5. "With the lowly is wisdom"—"with the well-advised is wisdom" (Prov. xi. 2. xiii. 10.) and especially with *faithfulness*, according to what is expressed by our blessed Lord himself, in Luke xii. 42, 43.—"Who is that faithful and wise Steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing."

But although a *wise Spirit* may sometimes be properly distinguished from a *prudent Spirit*, yet they ought never to be separated; like David, or rather "the Root and Offspring of David," David's Son, and David's Lord, the Minister of Christ must not only "feed the flock"—"according to the integrity of his heart, *but guide* them by the skilfulness of his hands;" Psalm lxxviii. 72. To this blessed purpose, the same "spirit of wisdom and understanding," that *rested upon* the great Head of the Church (Isaiah xi. 2.) is also necessary for all his Members, and especially for all his Ministers (Jer. xviii. 18.) to enable them, like their Divine Lord, to deal *prudently* (Isaiah lii. 13.) in this, as well as in every other part of their office.

By a *wise and prudent Spirit* in Preaching is understood that spiritual, gracious, and heavenly disposition, which teaches the happy partakers of it not only to *lay up*, but how to *lay out* spiritual and Divine knowledge; not only the Grace of God in the heart,

which is expressed by *wisdom*, "in the inner part" (Psalm li. 6. James iii. 13.) but the gift, talent, or ability, of conducting our Discourses, in such a method and manner, as may be most conducive to the using of knowledge aright — "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovcr upon an obedient ear;" Prov. xx. 11, 12. xv. 23. — The great end of Preaching—to *win souls*, and *make them wise unto Salvation*—and as carefully to guard against every thing that might hinder the work, or frustrate the glorious design—to say nothing but what, upon the most mature deliberation, he would desire to have said, and can heartily approve of for ever. Destitute of Divine *Wisdom*, like an ignorant traveller in a strange, difficult, and dangerous road, without a guide, and without a guard, we are not only entirely at a loss every step which we may attempt to take, but liable to stumble and fall, or wander from *the truth as it is in Jesus*, or "the path of life;" if not to *lose ourselves*, and those that *hear us*. The want of *this*—is the cause of all the inconsistencies, improprieties, and impertinencies, in every Church under Heaven; for want of this, *the hearts of those are often made sad, whom God would not have made sad*; for want of *this*, the sinner often goes away with the saint's portion, or the saint with the sinner's portion. Never were better Doctrines worse applied than the speeches of Job's friends.

In Col. i. 28. we read of the Apostles, and the rest of his brethren, "warning every man, and teaching every man in ALL wisdom." This may relate both to the *Subject Matter* and *Manner* of the Gospel Ministry.—To the *Subject Matter*, either as relating to the person, or the things—as "Christ the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24.)—or "we speak wisdom



wisdom among them that are perfect : yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory ;" 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7.—To the *manner* (which is our present business to enquire into)—it is not enough, that all our Hearers be *warned*, and *taught*, even in all " the things which belong to *their* peace," wherein true, heavenly, and Divine Wisdom lies, but they must be *warned* and *taught* WISELY ; they must be *dealt prudently* with. The Text is very expressive—" teaching in ALL Wisdom ;" by which we apprehend is meant, every thing that relates to those gifts and graces, which are either necessary or useful, in declaring *the whole counsel of God*, in a right way and manner—all the *wisdom* that God had bestowed upon them ; nay, the passage seems to imply so much as this—we not only use *all* the Powers, Gifts, Graces, Means and Opportunities, for this purpose, but—ALL the *wisdom* which God hath promised in his Word—all the *wisdom* we need for ourselves and our Hearers, we earnestly seek, and carefully, diligently, and faithfully lay out in the blessed Work—" warning every man" — whatever be his character, capacity, or circumstances.

*A wise and prudent Spirit* manifests itself in the following conduct—in fixing upon the most suitable part of God's Word upon every occasion ; in *rightly* opening, confirming, and improving the whole ; in laying a proper stress upon every part, according to its due value and importance ; in making the most of our Subject, time, and opportunity, when engaged therein ; in keeping close to the hearts of our People ; in *counting the cost*, and realizing the worth of their souls ; in weighing their several cases ; in guarding the Doctrines of the Gospel from all abuse ;

and, as far as possible, preventing our Hearers from *wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction*; in leading them the nearest, safest, best way, into the knowledge of all Divine Truth; in using the most likely and effectual dissuatives from sin, and persuasives to duty; in raising and governing all the affections of the soul, and conducting all the other gifts and graces of the Spirit.

If it were intended to enter into particulars on this weighty point, we might here present a threefold view of *wisdom* from Solomon, Paul, and Christ himself. We might consider the necessity of *wisdom*, as it relates to the *Subject Matter* of all our Discourses. Hence we are told—"because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd;" Eccles. xii. 9, 10, 11. We might consider the inseparable and beautiful connexion of spiritual *wisdom* with the whole of Divine Eloquence, in the diligent search and enquiry after the best and most suitable things—in the method or order, and disposition of every part—in the Language most becoming the Pulpit, and the best Manner of Delivery; but this would anticipate what is intended more fully to be opened, when we come to the *ELOQUENCE of the Pulpit*.

We might take a second view from the great Apostle's principles and practice, in 1 Cor. iii. 9—15. As far as a Minister of Christ is conformed to this wise Master-builder, he is careful to lay Christ for the Foundation of all his Discourses; *he takes heed how he builds thereon*; he carefully distinguishes between "wood, hay, and stubble," and "gold, silver,

silver, *and* precious stones." All the Doctrines he preaches, all the duties he presses upon his Hearers, are such, and only such, as are closely revealed and commanded in the Divine Word; such as are proper to the *Building*, and suitable to the *Foundation*. All the persons whom he admits ministerially into the *Building*, he considers as lively stones, living saints, not dead sinners; he takes heed, in using the most effectual means, to build them up in knowledge, faith, love, patience, and obedience, so as to grace and honour both the Builder and the Building to all eternity.

We might here take a third view, not only from Solomon and Paul, but principally from Christ himself. The Minister, who is under the influence of *a wise and prudent Spirit*, is concerned "*rightly to divide the Word of Truth*," and "*to give to every one their portion of meat in due season*;" 2 Tim. ii. 15. Luke xii. 42. Here it would be natural to consider both that *wisdom*, which relates to the Subject, and the Persons of the Hearers.

1st. The *Subject*.—This may be considered in all its parts. The Preacher's great concern should not only be to *declare the whole counsel of God*, as to the *Matter*; but to do it in a proper way and manner; not only to divide, but "*rightly divide the Word of Truth*;" and to lay open every part, whether Doctrine, Duties, Precepts, Promises, or Threatenings, in *such* a method, way, and manner, as his Hearers may both understand, and be affected with every thing, in proportion to its importance. He is not to confound, where God hath distinguished; nor separate, where God hath united; he knows that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." He is well acquainted, that some parts are more especially designed to prevent or ruin one



one sin, and some another ; some to strengthen and nourish one grace, and some another ; and therefore he is not only determined, like *Micah*, faithfully to declare *whatever* God saith to him, but also ever to guard what is spoken from the use, or rather abuse, which the weakness or wickedness of the heart might otherwise make of it, or the false and dreadful conclusions which sin and Satan might draw from any part of the Word, especially when separately viewed.

2d. We might here consider *a wise and prudent Spirit*, as it stands in relation to the *persons* of our Hearers.—A *prudent Minister* hath a word for all sorts of people, according to their different capacities, relations, characters, and circumstances ; whether superiors, equals, or inferiors, considered either in a natural, civil, or religious view.

1. *Capacities*.—The *prudent Minister* of Christ knows he is a “debtor both to the wise, and to the unwise ;” Rom. i. 14. and therefore he is careful, in all his Discourses, not to soar above the *capacities* of the ignorant and illiterate part of his Congregation, nor to advance any thing unworthy the wisest of mankind—not to sink beneath the dignity of his Subject, but in the simplicity of the Gospel to edify both. Christ himself preached the *Word* unto his Disciples, “as they were able to hear it,” and omitted *many things*, which he would otherwise have said, because they *could not then bear them* ; Mark iv. 33. John xvi. 12. Accordingly Paul speaks of *changing his voice* among the Galatians ; their conduct making a different spirit and temper needful ; Gal. iv. 20. At another time, the same Apostle tells us, that he *spoke* “after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of *their flesh* ;” Rom. vi. 19. And he “could not speak unto *the Corinthians* as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have

have fed you with milk (saith he) and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it;" 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. Heb. v. 12.—"Of some (saith Jude, verses 22, 23.) have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."

2. *Relations*.—The Minister having well considered the various duties which his Hearers owe to God, their neighbour, and themselves, he hath a *Word* suitable to each—whether Husband, Wife, Parent, Child, Master, Servant, King, or Subject.

3. *Characters*.—A *wise* and *prudent* Minister hath a Word for the sinner, and a Word for the saint; a Word for the ignorant, and a Word for the learned; a Word for the humble, and a Word for the proud; a Word for the weak, and a Word for the strong; a Word for the doubting, and a Word for the presumptuous; a Word for the sorrowful, and a Word for the comfortable—"Of some he *hath* compassion, and others *he saves* with fear."—"The terrors of the Lord, and the love of Christ," in their proper Seasons, *awe* and *constrain* him; to the impenitent, he is a *Son of Thunder*—to the mourner in Zion, a *Son of consolation*: Babes, young men, and fathers in Christ, have all their *portion*. "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies"—"like apples of gold in pictures of silver;" Eccles. xii. 11. Prov. xxv. 11. Wouldst thou, my soul, arrive at this holy skill in *Preaching*? take the advice of Solomon (Prov. ii. 3—6.)—unite in the petition of Paul for Timothy (2 Tim. ii. 7.)—turn the Promises into Prayer—"Cry after knowledge; *lift* up thy voice for understanding; *seek* her as silver; *search* for her, as for hid treasures"—learn to know more and more of thyself, and the state of thy flocks; and although some will not *bear* "the voice of Charmers, charming never so wisely" (Psalm

(Psalm lviii. 5.) yet, for the comfort of all the Ministers of Christ, *the Promise is sure*—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever;" Dan. xii. 3. Observe Joel ii. 15, 16, 17.

V. *A diligent and laborious Spirit.*—This is necessary, in order to the right performance of all the duties which we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves—not "slothful in business," especially in the great business of Religion; Rom. xii. 11. Every part of our work demands diligence—we must "keep *our hearts* with all diligence" (Prov. iv. 23.)—take heed to our lives—to "add to *our* faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity"—and "give *all* diligence to make *our* calling and election sure"—"that *we* may be found of him in peace *at last*;" 2 Peter i. 5—11. iii. 14.

But in particular, as Ministers, we must "take care of the Church of God;" and see that no man fail through our carelessness or neglect: like our Divine Master, and all his true followers, we must "work, while it is day." Spiritual husbandmen and oxen must be *diligent* and *laborious*; lose no time, and spare no pains, to accomplish the work, the all-important work. — Paul and Apollos "taught diligently;" Acts xviii. 18—25. And "is there not a cause?" The greatness of the work, which made the most *active* and *laborious* Minister in the world to say—"Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16.)—the wants of our fellow creatures all around—the infinite obligations, which we lie under for Creation, Preservation, but above all for Redemption, "Glory, Honour, Immortality, Eternal Life," at the end—the shortness and uncertainty of our lives  
and



and time—*all* loudly call upon us, in the language of the wisest of men—"Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" Eccles. ix. 10. xi. 6. The soul of the sluggard, and too often the Hearers of him who doth the work of the Lord *negligently*, like "the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding, is all grown over with thorns, while nettles cover the face thereof, and the stone wall is broken down"—My soul, *see and consider it well; look, and receive instruction;* Prov. xxiv. 30, 31, 32.

VI. *A zealous and fervent Spirit.* — We have already considered "the Office of a Bishop," which Paul stiles "a good work" (1 Tim. iii. 1.) and the same Apostle declares, that "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing;" Gal. iv. 18, and surely, if any thing deserves the name, in a superlative degree, it is the blessed contents of that Gospel, which brings "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;" Luke ii. 14. Hence we are not only forbidden to be "slothful in business," but commanded to be "fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;" Rom. xii. 11.—"The Spirit of Burning" is as necessary as "the Spirit of Judgement;" both must unite, both are indispensably needful (Isaiah iv. 4.) we mean, "a *ZEAL* according to knowledge;" a *zeal*, under the spiritual conduct and government of its heavenly Counsellor; "the Wisdom that is from above" (James iii. 17.) a *zeal* for the Glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the happiness of mankind, in every part of Religion, in proportion to its importance; a *zeal*, that cometh *from*, and resembles "the *ZEAL* of the Lord of Hosts;" and is truly pleasing and acceptable to him. *Zeal* and *fervency*, considered in general, are the Strength, Vigour, and Energy of the Soul, and all its Affections; it is not

so much a distinct grace or gift (although it may be distinguished from others) as the powerful exercise of *every* grace ; or, in other words, it is “ a live Coal from the Altar ” of atonement, that makes the Wisdom of the Lord, in the heart of a Minister of Christ, a burning fire, which hath a most vehement heat.

True spiritual *zeal* is an avowed enemy, on the one hand, to all indifference, luke-warmness, and neutrality, in the great and momentous affairs of God and our souls ; and, on the other, to that Heaven-detested, selfish, ignorant, superstitious, hypocritical, party, and persecuting spirit, which so often vilely dishonours its sacred Name : it is as contrary to *this*, as “ the Wisdom that is from above ” is to that which is from beneath—as the disposition of the celestial Angels, which are around “ the Throne of God and the Lamb,” is to that of the infernal Spirits in the bottomless pit. True *zeal* aims at nothing short of the ruin and destruction of the interests and empire of Satan, and the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in the world : It is one of the best friends and companions of Peace and Unity, of Repentance, Faith, Hope, Love, and every other Gift and Grace of the Spirit.

But let us take a view of this most amiable disposition, in its adorable Author and glorious Pattern—“ The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ; ” Psalm lxix. 9. John ii. 17. Every ordinance of Divine Service was performed by Christ with the most intense *zeal*. Did he pray ?—“ He offered up strong crying and tears ; ” Heb. v. 7. And Oh ! how earnestly did he long for the approach of his last supper here on earth !—“ With desire (saith the adorable Redeemer) I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer ”—“ how am I straitened till it (*i. e.* his Sufferings) be accomplished ; ”

Luke

Luke xxii. 15. xii. 50. And the same *zeal* is abundantly manifest in all his *Preaching*; a striking proof of this appears, when he was at the Feast of Tabernacles, as recorded in John vii. 37, 38.—“In the last Day, that Great Day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Conformity to Christ here is necessary in all his Ministers. John the Baptist “was a burning and a shining light”—“The voice of one crying in the Wilderness” (John v. 35. i. 23.)—he *burnt* with pure and ardent affection for Christ and souls; he *burnt* with holy indignation against sin; he *burnt* with supreme love to God. But most probably there never was a mere man fired with more *zeal* than Paul; for although as to outward and temporal things, however precious to human nature, there appeared an holy indifference in him; yet he was enabled to *cast* his “care upon him,” who *cared* for him; nor did he *count* even his *life dear* unto himself. (Observe his two excellent Speeches recorded in Acts xx. 24. xxi. 13. See also Gal. i. 8. Prov. i. 20. Isaiah lviii. 1.) But could he behold God dishonoured? Could he bear to see his Saviour *crucified afresh*, his Spirit grieved, and precious souls in danger; and stand a neuter? No; his *heart* was filled with *anguish*, and his eyes with *many tears*; and he drew forth every affection for their recovery and salvation: 2 Cor. ii. 4. Rom. x. 1. Surely this was true *zeal*! And “is there not a cause” for all this *zeal* and *fergency*? Our “adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, *is always walking* about, seeking whom he may devour;” 1 Peter v. 8. The *mad* world, in all ages, have been, and still continue, *casting* abroad “fire-brands, arrows, and death” (Prov. xxvi. 18.) and shall the enemies of all righteousness—shall the

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Ministers



Ministers of Darkness be more *zealous* for the ruin and destruction of precious souls, than the friends, the Ministers of Jesus Christ, are to *pluck* their fellow-creatures as *Brands* "out of the *burning*," in order that they may be recovered and saved? On the other hand, shall we not be willing to "spend and be spent" in so good, so great, so honourable, so glorious a cause? Should we not use all means to *stir up* every gift, and every grace, so as to get the holy fire kindled in our souls, into a Divine flame, so as to cause the hearts of our Hearers, like the two Disciples, to *burn within them*, when we *open the Scriptures*? Heb. i. 7. Joel iii. 16. Amos i. 2.

VII. and Lastly. *A grave and serious Spirit*.—By which is meant such a temper and disposition of mind, as Moses and Joshua discovered, when the Lord appeared to them—the former, in the *Burning Bush*; and the latter, with "*a drawn sword* in his hand" (Exod. iii. 2—6. Josh. v. 13.) or as Job and Isaiah experienced, when they *saw* "the King, the Lord of Hosts" (Job xlii. 5. Isaiah vi. 5.) or rather as the Seraphims, who (like Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 13.) *covered their face* (Isaiah vi. 2.) or as James and John, whom Christ "surnamed Boanerges, Sons of Thunder" (Mark iii. 17.) by which, it is apprehended, may be understood, the solemnity and terrible Majesty, wherewith their Hearers were awed and astonished in the delivery of their message; in the same manner as the People were affected, who heard the wonderful Sermon of our blessed Lord upon the Mount, when Christ delivered his Discourse as a Judge doth his Charge; Matt. vii. 28, 29. And "is there not a cause" for all this? Is there not abundant reason for the utmost seriousness and solemnity? O Sirs! the company present puts the question beyond, for *ever* beyond all controversy—God, the heart-searching and righteous God, is *present*—

sent—" the Great High Priest of our profession"—  
 " who walketh in the midst of the seven golden  
 Candlesticks" (Rev. i. 13. ii. 1.)—the holy and eter-  
 nal Spirit—" an innumerable company of Angels"  
 —and precious immortal souls (every one of which  
 is of more value than ten thousand worlds) are all  
*present* in our assemblies; and who, under the im-  
 pression of these awful, glorious considerations, can  
 possibly trifle herein?

The nature of our Work, things of infinite, of  
 everlasting concern—*everlasting* life or *everlasting* death;  
*everlasting* joys or *everlasting* sorrows, *everlasting* hap-  
 piness or *everlasting* misery; *things* for ever beyond  
 the power of imagination to conceive—more than  
 the united wisdom and eloquence of Men or Angels  
 can understand or express; tremendous, glorious  
*things*, in which we are all concerned; not as idle  
 spectators, but the very persons who must stand or  
 fall—be acquitted or condemned—saved or lost for  
 ever—happy or miserable to all eternity, as we use  
 or abuse, receive or reject, the blessed Gospel—  
*These* are *weighty* and *serious* affairs indeed! Solemn  
 even to think of; but inexpressibly more so to ex-  
 perience: *Things*, which fill all Heaven with wonder  
 and amazement, and all Hell with horror and de-  
 spair! Realizing this, will make us *grave* and *serious*.—  
*realizing this*, will effectually cure all levity and cor-  
 rupt communication—*realizing this*, will diffuse so-  
 lemnity and majesty through the whole of our de-  
 portment, and spread an heavenly Glory around our  
 souls, both in and out of the Pulpit.

Were we to enlarge, we might consider the nature  
 and blessed effects of *a constant Spirit*; 1 Cor. xv. 58.  
 But the whole of this Discourse may be summed up  
 in one word—LOVE. Love and affection to God and  
 our neighbour, to Christ and his Church, compre-  
 hends all the rest—" On these two Commandments  
 (faith

(saith an infallible Judge) hang all the Law and the Prophets." True *Love* to Christ and precious souls always disposes the happy partakers of it to serve and do good to the object beloved; and, in order thereto, to use all the means most likely to accomplish the end proposed. The exercise of all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which we have here considered, may, with great propriety, be termed the *Means*, which *Love* makes use of, in order to accomplish the ends designed; namely, humble *Love*, valiant *Love*, faithful *Love*, prudent *Love*, diligent *Love*, and serious *Love*; all this, and much more, seem evidently implied, though not directly expressed, in those wonderful Properties, which are briefly described, by the great Apostle, to this capital grace and heavenly affection; 1 Cor. xiii. 4—8.

"Charity suffereth long."—As far as a man is possessed of this Godlike disposition, he is fortified, like Job and Moses, with a greater or less degree of the meekness and patience of the Lamb of God.

"Charity is kind."—Like its Divine Author, it "is *KIND* *even* unto the unthankful, and to the evil;" Luke vi. 35. As the "man after God's own heart" *shewed kindness* to Mephibosheth "for Jonathan's sake" (2 Sam. ix. 1.) so every true and faithful Minister *shews kindness* to the Church of God "for Jesu's sake" (2 Cor. iv. 5.) or rather as God himself, who having *loved* his people "with an everlasting love, *draws them* with loving kindness;" Jer. xxxi. 3.—"In *his* tongue is the law of kindness;" Prov. xxxi. 26.

"Charity envieth not."—No; the heart, lip, and life, of every Member and Minister of Christ, as far as they are cast into the mould of the Gospel, is one continued scene of "good-will towards men." The comfort and happiness of others, though superior to his own, give him pleasure, joy, and



and delight ; so far from preaching Christ (like those of whom the Apostle speaks of, in Phil. i. 15.) from "envy and strife"—that the language of his inmost soul is like Moses, when he said—"Enviest thou for my sake ? Would God that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them !" Numb. xi. 29.

"Charity vaunteth not itself."—It is not "desirous of vain-glory ;" Gal. v. 26. It prohibits and condemns all proud boasting, every rash and inconsiderate word and action, which hath the least tendency to raise himself too high, or sink his neighbour too low ; agreeable to the advice in Eccles. v. 2.

"Charity is not puffed up."—It is not *Love*, but knowledge, mere ideal *speculative knowledge*, that (through the corruption and ignorance of our hearts) *puffeth up*. *Love* is the greatest enemy in the world to pride and vanity.

"Charity doth not behave itself unseemly."—This sweet and obliging temper teaches all the possessors of it discretion and good manners ; the best behaviour flows from *Love* ; destitute of this, all that is found in the world, however beautiful and charming it may appear, is but counterfeit.

"Charity seeketh not her own."—Self gives way to the Glory of Christ, and the good of our neighbour.

"Charity is not easily provoked," unless it be to *good works* ;—it is "not soon angry," but "slow to wrath."

"Charity thinketh no evil."—*Love* is not of a censorious temper, but puts the best construction that she is able upon the conduct of others : and although *Love*, when extended to its utmost bounds, cannot admit its possessor to entertain a good opinion of *all*, yet if he entertains a bad opinion of *any* in *particular*, it may not with propriety be said, that he *thinketh*

*thinketh* evil, seeing he doth not harbour the thought, without some just reason on his side, agreeable to Divine Revelation.

“Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity.”—No; not only his own sins, but the sins of others, even his bitterest enemies, are the cause of his grief and sorrow.

“Charity rejoiceth in the truth”—especially when innocency is cleared and protected.—Its possessor (like the beloved Disciple, 2 John 4. 3 John 4.) *rejoiceth* to do good *to*, and hear good *of* others. He *rejoiceth greatly* when others “walk in truth;” his *delight* is in “the saints that are in the earth, and in such as *excel* in virtue;” the *Word* of God is “the joy and rejoicing of *his* heart;” he longs and delights to hear the glad tidings, and that it “may have free course, and be glorified.”

“Charity beareth *or covereth* all things.”—“Charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Pet. iv. 8.) not from the eye of God, for that is impossible; all the *Charity* in the world can never *cover* or conceal one sin from him; “the Garments of Salvation, and the Robes of Righteousness,” which Jesus hath wrought out by his *obedience*, even unto *death*, and which God is graciously pleased to *put upon* his people, that, and that *alone*, can *cover* their sins; so that looking upon them, in the *face* of his *Anointed*, he *beholdeth no iniquity in them*.—But by *covering* here is meant—*abiding* or *concealing* from the eye of man, as far as it is for the good of the publick, and the safety of individuals. *Charity* teacheth its possessors to “bear one another’s burthens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ”—“to *bear* the infirmities of the weak”—to “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”

“Charity believeth all things.”—All good things concerning our neighbour, agreeable to Scripture  
an

and reason, where there is no cause to the contrary.

“Charity hopeth all things.”—Hopeth the best of all, as far there is any solid ground for the same.

“Charity endureth all things.”—It ENDURETH *hardness, afflictions, persecutions, and temptations*, “for the elects sakes;” 2 Tim. ii. 3. iii. 11. James i. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 10.

“Charity never faileth,” but—“endureth to the end;” and “he that endureth to the end shall be saved;” Matt. x. 22.

The *Love* of Christ to his Church is the most powerful MOTIVE, as well as the most perfect *pattern* for all his Ministers to follow—“Christ loved the Church” better than his own precious life.—This will serve instead of ten thousand arguments: *Love* is the best oratory, the most powerful eloquence to win, captivate, and subdue the hearts of our People. When, like Peter, we can make our appeal to the omniscient Jehovah—“Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee” (John xxi. 17.) this will animate us to break through all difficulties and discharge every duty—“Love is strong as death;” Cant. viii. 6. And when the people find that we *speake* “the truth in love,” that *we are willing to impart* “not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls”—*exhorting, and comforting, and charging* “every one, as a father doth his children”—then they are most likely to be won to Christ.

This is the way to unite a Church together, “as the heart of one man;” this is the sweet and all-attractive band of union to Christ, and one another—they are “knit together in love;” Col. ii. 2, 19. By this Spirit we most resemble God himself—“God is Love;” 1 John iv. 16.—But all this must be real, *not only in word and in tongue, “but in deed and in truth.”*



truth" (1 John iii. 18.) or else our profession at best is detestable hypocrisy. Our *Love* must be sincere, ardent, and consistent towards God; and pure, undissembled, and fervent towards our neighbour (Deut. vi. 5. Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39. Rom. xii. 9.) without this, were we possessed of the highest measures, the most exalted degrees of language and science, the utmost propriety of spirit, the greatest variety of expression, the most excellent style and delivery — "the tongues of men and of Angels, *we are* become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal;" 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

C H A P.

## C H A P. X.

## ON THE ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT :

## A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

*An Account of Divine Eloquence in general—proved an useful and desirable Qualification for all the Ministers of Christ. —That the Blessing of God is absolutely necessary to render even the most perfect Eloquence effectual to the spiritual-Good of our Hearers : --- That no Argument can be fairly deduced from this, or any other Source, against the Use and Improvement of Eloquence ; but that it affords a very strong Reason and Cause for Humility, and Dependence upon Jesus Christ.*

**H**AVING already considered the Gospel Ministry in general, from its Author, Nature, Causes, Necessity, and Design ; and the preparations fixed in the Divine Word, for a due performance of the whole, in the most acceptable and profitable manner ; we are now to engage, according to the Plan laid down, in a more particular Description of *Preaching*. Having also opened the Subject-Matter, the Method of handling the several Parts of the Gospel Ministry ; and considered the Manner, both as internal and external ; the former of these, which is called the SPIRIT of PREACHING, hath been the Subject of our last Discourse ; we now enter upon the latter, which

will conclude this Part of the Work : we mean, the ELOQUENCE of the PULPIT, containing both the Language and the Delivery : but before we enter particularly into this, we shall, agreeable to the Method already proposed, in a Preliminary Discourse,

I. Give an Account of DIVINE ELOQUENCE in general.—It may be called *Divine*, because God himself is the *Author*, and his Word the *Rule*—“ the great Mystery of Godliness” — *things*, which “ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard ; neither *hath it* entered into the heart of man” to conceive—*things*, “ which the Angels desire to look into”—the theme and subject, in which it is employed—the Glory of God, and the conversion, edification, and salvation of his Church—its grand design.

The *whole* of what is meant here by ELOQUENCE in general is comprehended by its adorable Author, in Exod. iv. 14. in his address to Moses, upon his complaint of the want of *Eloquence*, concerning Aaron, the Levite, his Brother—“ I know (saith the Lord) that he can speak well.” True *Eloquence* consists in *speaking well*; and Divine *Eloquence* in speaking Divine *things well*. What it is to *speak well* is to be the Subject of the present enquiry. This will naturally lead us to consider both the Language and Delivery of a Sermon, as far as we can learn from the precepts and examples, which are given to us, in the Old and New Testament, upon the Subject.

We might here enquire into the various names and properties, which are ascribed to *Eloquence*, by the inspired Penmen ; such as David (speaking of himself) calls, by a metaphor—“ The pen of a ready Writer” (Psalm xlv. 1.) Solomon—“ The Sweetness and Grace of the Lips” (Prov. xvi. 21. xxii. 11.) Luke—“ Gracious Words” (Luke iv. 22.) and Isaiah—“ The tongue of the learned ;” Isaiah l. 4.

But



But the above names and properties do not so much respect *Eloquence* in general, as the various kinds of *Eloquence*, which are made use of by the inspired Penmen, according to the Subject, or the peculiar manner, in which they spake. For instance—"My heart (saith the Psalmist) is inditing a good matter." The Subject of his meditation was superlatively, infinitely good, "touching the King"—the "King of Kings"—"the King, the Lord of Hosts"—"the King of Glory." His heart was full of his Subject, and "out of the abundance of *his* heart (like Elihu) his mouth speaketh:" his Divine conceptions and affections, under the influence of the Holy Spirit (like a fountain bubbling up) overflowed in the most rapid, copious, and sublime strains, as appears from the Psalm above quoted, which is full of inimitable grandeur; and, if an allusion may be borrowed, *decked* "with Majesty and Excellency, and *arrayed* with Glory and Beauty." But we must not enlarge here, as these, and many other passages will occur, when we come to the more particular consideration of the Subject. — Having taken a slight view of its nature in general, we are naturally lead to shew,

II. That ELOQUENCE is *an useful and desirable gift and qualification* for all the Ministers of Jesus Christ; —that it is a *Gift* is evident from the express Word of God—"The answer of the tongue is from the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 1.) when there is a conformity in the expression and delivery to the spirit, temper, and disposition of the heart *prepared* by the Lord—"The Lord God" (saith the sublime Evangelical Prophet) "The Lord God (declareth his Divine Master, speaking 'as Mediator) hath given me the tongue of the learned" (Isaiah l. 4.) for although *the Word* that "was in the beginning with God" *was*  
God,

God, and consequently, as "all things were made by him" (John i. 1, 2, 3.) he was the maker of man's mouth; yet, as he himself "was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us" (John i. 14.) "the Lord God and his Spirit" were concerned in the preparation of his human nature, for the perfect execution of all the offices he sustaineth both in Heaven and Earth. Accordingly *Grace*, not only all *fulness* of *Grace*, which is to be communicated for the supply of the Church in every age, even to the end of the world; but this Divine FAVOUR, the gift of utterance, in the highest degree, is declared to be poured into Christ's lips (Psalm xlv. 2.)—"His mouth is most sweet" (Cant. v. 16.) and this he, who, in conjunction with the Father and the Holy Spirit, enriches every one of his Ministers, not only with all wisdom, but with all utterance; 1 Cor. i. 5.

That ELOQUENCE is an useful and desirable qualification will not be denied by any who have ever duly weighed the nature of the work, the Scriptures in general, or those parts which have just been mentioned in particular. Were it necessary it might here be confirmed, from all the precepts which are contained in the Divine Oracles, for its improvement; from all the promises of assistance, in the use of appointed means; and from all the Prayers of Christ's Ministers in every age: but this would carry us beyond our intended bounds: What hath been mentioned before, concerning that part of a Minister's qualification—"apt to teach"—supercedes the necessity of enlargement.

We mean to shew here, not only that it is an useful and desirable qualification, but for what purposes it is so; which is resolved into the design of the Gospel Ministry, already more largely described. It is of use for the *Instruction*, *Conviction*, and *Edification* of the Church in particular.

For

For INSTRUCTION.—Hence, saith the wisest of men, “the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning” (Prov. xvi. 21.) all kinds of *learning*, whether human or Divine. Let a man’s capacity for laying up knowledge be ever so great—suppose, like Solomon, his *heart* be as *large* “as the sand that is on the sea-shore,” yet any farther than he hath a talent, an ability of communicating the things belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven, they are a *fountain sealed*—a *treasury locked up* from others.

For CONVICTION and EDIFICATION. — Accordingly we hear of *Apollos*, who was “an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; mightily *convincing* the Jews;” and that he “helped them much which had believed through Grace;” Acts xviii. 24, 27, 28. *Through Grace* they believed, and *through Grace* his *Eloquence* was the means of the *Conviction* of the former, and the *Edification* of the latter.

Solomon saith, “the heart of the Wise teacheth his mouth (as Moses taught Aaron) and addeth learning to his lips;” Prov. xvi. 23. Here it may be truly said, that “the tongue of the Just is as choice silver” (Prov. x. 20.) “A wholesome tongue is a Tree of Life” (Prov. xv. 4.) and “the lips of the Righteous feed many;” Prov. x. 21. Yes; there is a peculiar pleasure, a sweetness, and beauty; a real captivating, irresistible *beauty*, in Divine or spiritual *Eloquence*; that *Eloquence*, which flows from wisdom and purity of heart—“The heart of the Wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips;” Prov. xvi. 23. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Prov. xxv. 11.) when the heart (if the figure may be used) is *moulded* into the Subject, the language *moulded* into the heart, and the delivery *cast* into the *mould* of the language.

It



It must be a great blessing, when *a wise heart* and *an eloquent tongue* meet together : *a wise heart* to treasure up knowledge, and *an eloquent tongue* to bring out of *these treasures* "things new and old," resemble something of the meeting of Moses and Aaron ; yet they are often separated, for God distributeth his gifts "to every man severally as he will" (1 Cor. xii. 11.) what is wanting in one is found in another ; "all have not the same office," nor all the same "measure or proportion of faith ;" Rom. xii. 3, 4, 6. This sheweth the mutual dependence of the Members and Ministers of Jesus one upon another, and the love and affection which ought to be found in all, as *depending* upon God. It seems, that Moses was *wiser* than Aaron, and Aaron more *eloquent* than Moses. But that wonderful Person occurs to our thoughts, in whom these Blessings were both happily united—*One*, who hath not only "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," but the gift of speaking, in a graceful manner, in the highest degree—*One*, who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above *his* fellows" (Psalm xlv. 7. Heb. i. 9.)—and *One*, who had the *Spirit* in his *unmeasurable fulness* (John iii. 34.) therefore we find, that all the people "wondered at the Gracious Words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke iv. 22.) and doubtless there was that in his unparalleled *manner*, as well as *matter*, which might justly fill Heaven and Earth with wonder and astonishment—"Never man spake like this Man ;" John vii. 46. "Never man spake" such great and wonderful things ; used such a lovely, admirable method and order ; or felt such enlarged and strong sentiments and affections ; *never man* used such pure, proper, graceful, pathetic and sublime language ; or delivered himself with such propriety,

priety, perspicuity, variety, energy, dignity, and majesty. What is said of his Person in general is equally true of his *Eloquence* in particular—he is “fairer than the children of men” (Psalm xlv. 2.) “his mouth is most sweet” (Cant. v. 16.) his Word, and the delivery of it, transcendently, yea, infinitely precious, pleasant and delightful; in a word, it “is altogether lovely.”

Here let us pause awhile, or rather turn back in our meditations to the City of Nazareth, and realize something of the MANNER of him *who spake as never man spake*; John vii. 46. Behold here the Desire of all Nations, the Great Head of the Church, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, standing in the Holy Place, when “there was delivered unto him the Book of the Prophet Esaias;” Luke iv. 17. View him with his own hands, those *hands* which were as diamonds set in rings of gold; those *hands*, which were in a little while to *seal* the Truth of the Doctrine, which he was now about to preach, with his infinitely precious blood, *opening* the Sacred Volume, which was a copy of his loving, gracious, all-compassionate heart. Behold “his eyes as the eyes of doves, washed with milk, and fitly set”—those *eyes*, which had been so often lifted up to Heaven “for the life of the world,” and were soon to be closed in death for the redemption of the Church, now fixed upon his wonderful Text:—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;” Luke iv. 18, 19.

O Isaiah, did the glad tidings reach your ears? Did some favourite Angel bring you the joyful news,

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that

that in this very place the adorable Personage, whom you saw in one of your most glorious visions, was now actually fulfilling this wonderful prophesy? Say, did not the high honour deeply affect you? Did not new wonder, love, joy and praise, increase your happiness, and make even the Heaven of Heavens more heavenly? But we must attend the Redeemer.—Having “opened the Book,” he now begins to *open* his Subject, and *open* his heart to his auditory. The Synagogue is all eye, all ear: the soul of Jesus, like the Sun in the Heavens, all burning shining light, all nature, all Scripture, “all hearts are OPEN,” and without a covering before him; all fulness of every Gift and every Grace; whatever is truly great and wonderful in Heaven and in Earth centre in him; they all hear, see, feel, and wonder; and well they might—“never man spake like this man;” John vii. 46.

*Aaron*, we have been told, near six thousand years ago, the omniscient God himself hath told us, that you could *speake well*; Exod. iv. 14. *Isaiab*, like your Divine Master, you had “the tongue of the learned;” *Isaiah* l. 4. *Ezekiel*, you were the “Song of one that *had* a pleasant voice, and *could* play well on an instrument;” you had an excellent tongue, and knew *well* how to use it; Ezek. xxxiii. 32. *David*, your *tongue* was “the pen of a ready Writer;” Psalm xlv. 1. *James* and *John*, you were “Sons of Thunder;” and you, *Barnabas*, were a “Son of Consolation;” Mark iii. 17. Acts iv. 36. *Apollos*, you were celebrated for “an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures;” Acts xviii. 24. But we do not forget you, *Paul*; you, who, even when a prisoner at the bar, made your Judge *tremble* (Acts xxiv. 25.) you remember when you preached at  
Lystra,



Lystra, you were taken, but, as you humbly, zealously owned and declared, mistaken for the God of *Eloquence*; Acts xiv. 8—18. Come hither, *Aaron, Isaiah, Ezekiel, David, Solomon, Peter, James, John, Barnabas, Paul, Apollos*; come hither, ye holy Prophets; come hither, ye Apostles of the Lamb; bring with you the whole human and angelic Race; attend, surround, see, hear, feel, admire *ELOQUENCE* itself: Behold with believing, wondering, adoring eyes and hearts; *behold* not the feigned, but the true GOD of *ELOQUENCE*! Alas! what am I saying? You have already seen his face, and heard his voice (if not all in the body, you now “see him as he is”) your eyes, and the eyes of your Brethren, now behold that eternal Word, who called a world from nothing into existence; it was he who spake in your behalf in the *counsels of peace*—“Lo, I come” (Psalm xl. 7.) *He*, who spake *pardon and reconciliation* for his enemies, in words and blood upon the Cross (Luke xxiii. 34.) *He*, who speaks *life into dead souls*—“a word in Season to him that is weary” (Eph. ii. 1. Isaiah l. 4.) *He*, who will one day pronounce the final sentence—“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;” Matt. xxv. 34. Yes; *He*, and *He* alone, can give efficacy to what he speaks, open the heart, and change the very nature of man, *wound* and *beal* the wounded conscience; Deut. xxxii. 39. 1 Sam. ii. 6. This was one great end of his heavenly Father in giving him (as was just before observed) “the tongue of the learned, that *he* should know how to speak a word in Season to him that is weary;” Isaiah l. 4. Matt. xi. 28. He not only preaches “the Gospel to the poor,” but *enriches* them with *faith*, and makes them “*heirs of the Kingdom*” of Heaven

(James ii. 5.) He is a Physician that can *speake* or *send* his *Word*, and “heal the broken-hearted, *deliver* captives, *recover* sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke iv. 18. Isaiah lxi. 1.) but all others are left behind. The effects of the greatest human or angelic *Eloquence*, in this respect, may be compared to the “morning cloud and early dew.” Who is Paul, and who is Apollos? Paul may *plant*, and Apollos *water*; but God alone can *give the increase*; 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6.—It is “not by *human* might, nor by *human* power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. iv. 6.) He alone can *command* “the Blessing, even life for evermore” (Psalm cxxxiii. 3.)—which is,

III. *Absolutely necessary* to render even the greatest ELOQUENCE *effectual* to the *spiritual advantage* of our *Hearers*.—When the Lord *sent* Moses and Aaron to *Pharaoh*, that he might “bring forth *his* People, the Children of Israel, out of Egypt;” he said to Moses—“I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth;” Exod. iii. 10, 11. iv. 14, 15. Should it be said, that it is no wonder, that the Lord should promise to be *with Moses’s mouth*—“My Lord (saith he) I am not eloquent; but am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue;” Exod. iv. 10. But why is it said—*with his*, why *with Aaron’s mouth*? Did not Jehovah, the omniscient Jehovah himself, declare—“I know that he can speak well;” he has the ability in which thou art defective, he is ELOQUENT; Exod. iv. 14. The truth is—that nothing short of the fulfilment of this Promise is sufficient to answer the grand design of Jesus Christ, in sending out his Ministers to *bring forth* his People from an infinitely worse *bondage*. It is this precious, “exceeding great and precious *Promise*”—“Lo, I am with you  
always,

always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20.)—it is the Lord's *working in and with* his Ministers, that puts an energy, an almighty *energy* into the voice of the Speaker, and clothes his Word with irresistible power. Yes; unless God be *with the mouths* of the most ELOQUENT, they may speak never so purely, properly, plainly, pleasingly, and pathetically; yet they cannot speak *effectually* to the Heart. The *heart* of man by nature is like the *Leviathan*, "firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether mill-stone;" and is so impenetrable and closely shut up, that it resists, as *stubble* and *rotten wood*, all our reason, and all our rhetorick; Job xli. 24—28. God, and *only* God, who *made* man at first "in his own image," can "take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh;" Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 26.—"He can make his sword to approach unto him;" Job xl. 19. In this view, the Speech of the most *eloquent* Orator is upon a level with "the tongue of the *stammerer*;" neither the *Wisdom* of *Moses*, nor the *Eloquence* of *Aaron*, can prevail, without the Presence and Blessing of Jesus Christ; John xv. 5. How many excellent Sermons have been useless to a great, if not the greatest part of some Congregations, when, one might be apt to think, if it were in the nature and power of *Eloquence* alone to accomplish the design, every soul must be won to Christ!

May it not be truly said concerning many in our day, as of *Ezekiel* of old—"Thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument of *musick*?" Ezek. xxxiii. 32. This Prophet had "a pleasant voice," an excellent *instrument*; and, like an excellent musician, he knew how to use it; like *Aaron*, he could *speak well*; Exod. iv. 14. "They  
hear



hear thy Words," saith the Lord (probably with joy, delight, pleasure, and admiration; and hung upon the lips of the Orator) "but they will not do them"—they will not *bear*, so as to *obey*—they "will not hearken to the voice of Charmers, charming never so wisely;" Psalm lviii. 5.—"We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented;" Matt. xi. 17. Luke vii. 32.—"Ye will not (saith our blessed Lord himself) come to me, that ye might have life;" John v. 40. The Prophet Ezekiel might charm the ear, captivate the fancy, move the affections; and doubtless he aimed at the understanding, conscience, and above all—the *Will*; but "when a strong man armed keepeth his Palace, his goods are in peace;" none but a *stronger* can *overcome him*: Sin and Satan are only to be vanquished by the arm of Omnipotence—"God shall *persuade* Japheth;" Luke xi. 21, 22. Gen. ix. 27.—But should this discourage any of the Ministers of Jesus from the use and improvement of ELOQUENCE? By no means; if we impartially weigh and consider what hath been already advanced, we shall find the truth and propriety of this conclusion—

IV. and lastly. *That no argument can be fairly deduced from this, or any other source, against the use and improvement of ELOQUENCE.*—No: we are to *stir up* whatever gift God hath been pleased to bestow upon us; and the more advantageous and desirable it is, the more diligent we should be in the use of appointed means. As *Eloquence* is the gift of God, this *gift* also should be *stirred up*, and blown into a flame, by Reading, Meditation, and fervent Supplication, until both heart and tongue are prepared for what lieth before us.

But

But from what hath been said, an evident proof arises of the need of humility, and dependence upon God, in the use of means. The question, which the Lord proposed to Moses—"Who hath made man's mouth?" (Exod. iv. 11.) not only carries a sharp reproof to him along with it, but in awful Majesty conveys a lesson of profound *Humility*, as well as a motive to excite our *confidence* in him; not only "the preparations of the heart, *but* the answer of the tongue is from the Lord;" Prov. xvi. 1. This is true both in civil and sacred Matters.

What was declared of Cyrus, King of Persia, the mighty warrior—"I girded thee, though thou hast not known me" (Isaiah xlv. 5.) may be said with equal propriety of the most renowned Orators in every age; all their powerful *Eloquence*, and conquests over man's affections, come from him as the God of Nature and Providence: but in a more especial manner, as the God of all Grace to the blood-bought Church, the Lord promised and gave to his Ministers and Apostles all their abilities, that he might, by their instrumentality, "plant the Heavens, and lay the Foundations of the Earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my People;" Isaiah li. 16.

Our blessed Lord *gave* to his Disciples a *mouth* and *wisdom*, which none of their adversaries were able to gainsay or resist. Hence the Ministers of the Gospel were taught by the Precepts of their Divine Master, and the Practice of his Apostles, to own their entire *Dependence* upon him. Accordingly the Great Apostle fervently prays, and earnestly pleads with the Church to unite in his Supplications, that *utterance might be given him; that he might speak boldly as he ought to speak*, with all that *Liberty, Boldness, Magnanimity, Fervency, Gravity, and Authority,*

*Authority*, which become a Christian, a Minister, an Apostle, and an Ambassador of Jesus Christ; Eph. vi. 19, 20. Col. iv. 3. Acts ii. 4. 2 Cor. viii. 7.

For the present, we shall close, intending, if the Lord permit, in our next Discourse, to enter upon *the Style and Language most becoming the Pulpit.*

C H A P.



## C H A P. XL.

ON THE LANGUAGE MOST BECOMING THE  
PULPIT.

*Eccles. xii. 10. "The Preacher sought to find out ACCEPTABLE WORDS."—Text explained---Human and Divine Eloquence contrasted by the great Apostle. Reasons assigned by him for his refusing the former, and using the latter---that the grand Design of the blessed Gospel might not be frustrated, but effectually carried into execution to the Glory of Divine Wisdom, Love, and Power, in the Salvation of Souls.---The Holy Scriptures thoroughly furnish the Minister of Christ with the most perfect Precepts, and the most powerful Patterns and Examples of every Kind of Eloquence---with the most plain, clear, and easy Language to instruct---the most beautiful to captivate the Imagination---the most sweet and musical to charm the Ear---the most pathetick and sublime to move and raise the whole Soul.---We must understand and feel the Purity, Simplicity, Harmony, Beauty, Energy, and Majesty of our Bibles, if we desire to be truly divinely Eloquent. --- The Precepts in general are to use pure and plain Language---"sound Speech that cannot be condemned"---"Words easy to be understood"---in particular, such as are proper and peculiarly adapted to the Subject---the Capacity of our Hearers---the Occasion and Design of our Discourse, as well as the different Powers and Faculties of the human Soul.*

**I**N our three last Discourses, we considered the *Subject-Matter—the different Parts—and the Spirit of Preaching*—all which are certainly of infinite consequence. Notwithstanding, as they must be known and experienced, before they can be of any real

use or advantage to the souls of the Hearers, it naturally follows, that all the means, by which this is effected, also deserve a share in our meditations, in proportion to their importance: and as this is partly by words, we are here led to consider the *Style and Language*, or Expression, *most becoming* and suitable to *the Pulpit*. Accordingly the Structure of the following Discourse shall be raised upon what is related by Solomon and Paul — “The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words.” — “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;” Eccles. xii. 10. 1 Cor. ii. 13.

If we look backwards a few moments, we shall find Solomon, the inspired Penman (after he had closed his excellent Sermon on the *vanity* of all earthly things) recommending, from his own experience and practice, the diligent use and improvement of one of the most essential gifts and qualifications of a Minister of Jesus Christ, *i. e.* WISDOM — “And moreover, because the Preacher was WISE;” Eccles. xii. 9. *Wisdom* is very necessary for all other Preachers as well as Solomon — “Wisdom is profitable to direct” in every part of our duty, but more especially in the Gospel Ministry (Eccles. x. 10.) without this, Ministers cannot *shew* themselves “approved unto God, and be workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth:” a greater than Solomon hath settled this point — “Who then is that faithful and wise Steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath;” Luke xii. 42, 43, 44. But this hath already been largely spoken to, when we treated

treated *on a wise and prudent Spirit*, in a former Chapter.

“He still taught the People KNOWLEDGE;” Eccles. xii. 9. Here we have the Subject of the Wise Man’s Discourse comprehended in one word—*Knowledge*—all “the things which belong unto *our* peace,” principally such as were most for the Glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the happiness of mankind—Like his royal Father—*he fed them* “with knowledge and understanding.” This was both the *matter* of their food, and the *manner* in which *he fed them*; Psalm lxxviii. 72.

The *Subject-Matter* of his Discourse is further declared — “He set in order MANY PROVERBS” (Eccles. xii. 9.) *all* those wise, weighty, and eloquent sayings, which abound in his invaluable Writings; *many*, a great number, as well as variety, for the Service of the Church in every age. From these Treasures, with all the other parts of Scripture, “every Scribe, which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure things new and old;” Matt. xiii. 52.

“He TAUGHT the People knowledge.” — This was a proof of his *Wisdom*; like David, or rather David’s Son and David’s Lord—“he GUIDED them by the skilfulness of his hands:” so did the great Apostle Paul, and so must *every* Minister, in *preaching* Christ—“warn every man, and teach every man in all WISDOM;” Col. i. 28.

But it is declared — “He STILL taught the People knowledge.” — He was constant in the heavenly business. This is an encouragement for Ministers, as well as Christians, to *go forward*—to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; forasmuch (saith the Apostle)



as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord ;" 1 Cor. xv. 58.

" Yea, he GAVE good HEED." — If Ministers really desire to *save themselves, and those that hear them*, they must take heed both to themselves and their *Doctrine* ; 1 Tim. iv. 16.

" Yea, he GAVE good heed ;" Eccles. xii. 9. — His soul was *engaged* in the Work ; he did it "heartily as to the Lord ;" he was *all-attention* to the mind and will of God upon the Subject ; cautious to avoid every thing *contrary*, and careful and serious in whatever *belonged* either to the *matter*, or the *manner* of his Discourses. Accordingly, in the same verse, we are immediately presented with some of the principles or outlines of *Rhetorick* and *Eloquence*, together with a few of the spiritual and gracious effects which, by a Divine Blessing, attend its proper use—"and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs." Here, without wandering from the inspired Penman's design, might be considered,

First. What is called, by Writers on *Rhetorick*—*INVENTION*, or the *seeking* and *finding out* arguments ; but this is not our present business. The words may be taken in a more large and extensive sense—"He sought out ;" as the wisest of men, he made use of all the talents which God had given him, both to lay up knowledge for himself, and to lay it out for others—*he sought* from the two great Volumes of Nature and Scripture, as far as the mind and will of God was then revealed—*he sought* both from Earth and Heaven ; nor did he give up the search, until he had found what *he sought*—"He sought out" *matter* for his Discourses ; and in what could the Wisest of Men better employ his inventive powers ? Or what *search* can any or all the holiest and best of Ministers engage in of equal importance with the *Word* and *Works* of God ?—But next we

are

are told, that, after *he had sought out*, "he set in ORDER many Proverbs."—Here we might consider,

Secondly. *The Disposition of a Sermon.*—"He set in ORDER"—in such *order* as appeared to him, under the conduct of Divine Wisdom, most likely to *answer* the great end both of his writing and preaching, the real spiritual, temporal, and eternal good of mankind. But it is not our design to enter into this point at present, having already considered it in a preceding Chapter, but to hasten to the Subject in hand.

Solomon did not think it enough to SEEK OUT *matter* for his Discourses, nor judge it sufficient to range their various parts in the best *method* and *order* (as every Minister, to the utmost of his knowledge and abilities, ought to do) but when he had found what *he sought*—when his heart was fixed upon his Subject, and he had duly weighed and *disposed* it in his own mind, he was moreover careful, that the heavenly things which he taught might not appear at a disadvantage, but in their own pure and native dress. He was desirous of cloathing his Divine sentiments and heavenly affections in suitable and becoming expressions, in language worthy of God, and proper for man—such as might administer, at the same time, both pleasure and profit; not only gain the ear, but *fasten* upon the hearts of his Auditory. Accordingly we are told, that—"the Preacher sought to find out ACCEPTABLE WORDS" (Eccles. xii. 10.) which seems to comprehend,

Thirdly. The whole of Pulpit *Elocution*, or all that is necessary for us to enquire after, with regard to the *Style* or *Language*, and manner of expression in Preaching. In farther discoursing upon this Passage, we might enlarge upon all that is essential to a *Preacher* of the Gospel—"The PREACHER sought"—enter more particularly into the object of his search—

search—"ACCEPTABLE WORDS"—and then proceed to the *care, diligence, and constancy* required in the use of all appointed means, in order to attain the end—"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable Words." But as this hath been already spoken to, we shall here confine our meditations chiefly to one of these particulars—the object of his *search* (*i. e.*) "ACCEPTABLE WORDS." Accordingly we shall take a two-fold view of this Passage, as comprehending both the *Subject-Matter* of Solomon's Writings and Discourses in general, or his *Language and Expression* in particular; nor can this be called *wresting* of Scripture: if it be a truth, that the words of the Holy Ghost ought to be understood and explained in the fullest latitude of signification, that the context and the analogy of Faith will bear, we shall find both here united.

1st. That by "ACCEPTABLE WORDS," in this place, may be intended the *Subject* of Solomon's Discourse, distinct from his *manner* of handling it, or his *Language and Expression*. It would be needless to attempt a long proof of the separate existence of words and things to any who exercise their reason (a person might as well attempt to prove, that the Creation of the World and the Invention of Language actually existed together) especially when an Apostle hath so evidently distinguished the one from the other, in this remarkable Text — "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" 1 Cor. ii. 13. Here is a clear and evident *distinction*, though there is no real *separation* intended; "for as the body without the spirit is dead," so are mere words without ideas, without sentiment, without affection; but this is not the case with the Holy Scriptures; this was not the case with any of the Apostles of Christ: No;—"eye hath not seen,  
nor



nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"—*the things* contained in the words they spake : 1 Cor. ii. 9. On the other hand, all our ideas, sentiments, and affections, without language and expression, would be useless and unprofitable to others. Thus with respect to the *Style* and *Language* of a *Preacher*, we do not mean words without ideas, any more than ideas without words ; but the *Language* of our ideas, and the *Expression* of our sentiments and affections ; as we can by no means imagine, that Solomon so carefully and diligently busied himself in hunting after sounds without sense.

But to return to the proof of what hath been proposed, that by "ACCEPTABLE WORDS" may be understood the *Subject* of Solomon's Discourse ; and this is clearly distinguished, without separating it, from his *Language* and *Expression*, or his *manner* of handling it. It is manifest, in various parts of Scripture, that the *sign* is not only put *with*, but *for* the thing *signified*. Thus words, which may be called the symbolical marks or signs of our thoughts are put *for* them : we have an evident proof of this in the context—"He taught the People knowledge, and that which was written was upright, even Words of Truth" (Eccles. xii. 9, 10.) *i. e.* the Subject was agreeable to the mind and will of God, and spoken and written in the *sincerity* and *uprightness* of his heart ; he did not "*handle* the Word of God deceitfully ;" so that not only the *Language* he made use of, but the *matter* of his Discourse, and a conformity in the temper and disposition of his heart to his Subject, may be intended, agreeably to his Divine counsel and advice—"My son, attend to my words, incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes : keep them in the midst of thine heart. For

For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh;" Prov. iv. 20, 21, 22. We have not the least reason to doubt, but that what Paul calls **THE THINGS**, the *great* and *important* THINGS, are here principally intended; for no mere words or sounds can give *life* and *health*; but "*the Gospel is the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth*;" Rom. i. 16.—The "whole-some words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," bring *life* and *health* to all that seek and find them. A greater than Solomon, in his wonderful Speech to his Disciples, hath put this beyond all controversy — "The Words that I speak unto you (says Christ) they are Spirit, and they are Life;" John vi. 63. *This* cannot be confined to the mere sounds or syllables which our Lord uttered; though even with regard to his Language, and the manner in which he delivered himself, it may be said, with the utmost propriety (as already hath been more fully opened in a Preliminary Discourse) — "His mouth is most sweet" — "Never man spake like this man" — yet the *spiritual, life-giving, and heavenly Doctrines*, which he taught, are more particularly intended.

2d. But let us attend awhile to the quality of those words, namely — "ACCEPTABLE" — "The Preacher sought to find out **ACCEPTABLE Words**," *Words of DELIGHT*. It is a mournful consideration, that the generality of mankind bear too sad a resemblance to the Jews of old — "they have no **DELIGHT** in the Word of the Lord." The great things of God's Law are too much counted as *strange things*; the natural man taketh no pleasure therein; nor is the Gospel a *joyful sound* to those who never saw and felt their need of its adorable Author, and his great Salvation: nevertheless they are "ACCEPTABLE Words." All the wisest, holiest, and

and best of Beings in Heaven and Earth unite in proof of this ; God himself is pleased, highly, infinitely *pleased* with them—" *He hath magnified his WORD above all his Name*" (Psalm cxxxviii. 2.)—his heart is open—his "good, ACCEPTABLE, and perfect Will" therein is clearly revealed.

"The Desire of all Nations," with infinite *delight*, left his Father's Bosom, and took up his abode here on Earth for three and thirty years, in order to *fulfil the Law and the Prophets*, and make way for the everlasting enjoyment of their sacred and wonderful Contents. The holy and eternal Spirit breathes in this Blessed Book—breathes in all the Writings of the Old and New Testament, and shews the boundless pleasure God takes therein, by the use which he hath been making of them, for almost six thousand years, in the Recovery and Salvation of "ten thousand times ten thousands, and thousands of thousands," of the ruined Sons and Daughters of Adam, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ;" *an innumerable company* of which are now assembled before the Throne of Glory, praising, admiring, and adoring the ever-blessed God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for this precious, precious, invaluable Book—the BIBLE. And are the Churches on Earth silent? No ; that is impossible ; they freely, heartily, joyfully acknowledge their infinite, everlasting obligations for "the Word of Life." Never was *Liberty* more *acceptable* to the *Captives*—"the opening of the prison to them that are bound"—health to the sick—"food to the hungry"—cold water to the thirsty, or pardon to the condemned—than *the WORD of God* is to the true Believer ; for, like Job, he *esteems* it "more than his necessary food." Oh ! "how sweet (saith the Christian, in the language of David) are thy Words unto my taste ! yea, sweeter than honey and the

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honey-



honey-comb." And he exults, and says with Jeremiah (who, as Solomon, had been seeking after the knowledge and experience of the Holy Scriptures)—“Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.”—“*He rejoiced* as one that findeth great spoil.” Here he *finds* the Pearl of great Price; he hath *fixed* his everlasting *choice*; he hath *taken* the “*Testimonies of God* as an heritage for ever.” Here he finds *unsearchable riches* “more to be desired than gold; yea, than *the most fine gold*.” What the sublime inspired Penman saith of *Divine Wisdom* may not improperly, with a very little variation, be said of the *Divine Word*—“Man knoweth not the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir; with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls; for the price of Wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold;” Job xxviii. 13, 16—19.

Thus, by “*ACCEPTABLE WORDS*,” it is sufficiently evident, that we may safely understand not only the language, but the *Subject-Matter* of Solomon’s Writings and Discourses, as composing a part of the sacred Volume; the sum and substance of which is—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” But, at the same time, we apprehend also, that the Text ought not to be confined to the *Subject-Matter* of *Preaching*. Accordingly we proceed to enquire more particularly, agreeably to the Passage chosen, and others of a like nature in the New Testament, into *the Style and Language of the Pulpit*, or to furnish out an answer to this question—What are those *acceptable Words* which constitute *the Style and Language of the Pulpit*? This may

may be best understood, by comparing the Passage with what the great Apostle declareth, when speaking upon the same Subject.—Here we shall lay it down as a fixed point, that (as they were both inspired by the same Spirit, whose “ Word is not yea and nay ; but yea and amen ;” 2 Cor. i. 18, 19, 20.) the Holy Ghost never speaketh any contradictions or inconsistencies ; but notwithstanding the difference of times, places, and dispensations, they lived under, or any degree of inspiration, there must be, upon the whole, a perfect harmony. In general then, it may be asserted, that by “ ACCEPTABLE WORDS” are meant “ not the words which man’s wisdom teacheth ; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” Hence may be clearly discerned a striking contrast placed by the Apostle between human and Divine Eloquence. It will be of importance here to consider what is meant by—“ the words which man’s wisdom teacheth”—and what is to be understood by—“ *Words*, which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” In order that we may see the propriety of the Apostle’s conduct in disclaiming the former, and embracing the latter, and be enabled to act accordingly, we shall begin with,

I. The *Language*, which the Apostles declare they did not make use of ; wherein will be shewn, that they did not form their Discourses upon the plan of *human Eloquence*, and that they had the best reasons which could be advanced for *renouncing it*.—Let us consider the Text in the manner as it is related—“ Not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth ;” 1 Cor. ii. 13. Here might be taken notice of the Author’s expression—MAN ; the Attribute, which is ascribed to him as a Teacher—*Wisdom* : It might also be shewn, that these words are *taught* ; and then we might enter into their natural *character*,

1. The author—MAN. Not MAN, as he came out of the hands of his Maker, when he bore his Divine and heavenly Image: in this state we might reasonably expect (“for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;” Matt. xv. 34.) propriety and perfection to be the constant produce of *man’s wisdom*. As the various names, which Adam gave to the creatures, were suitable to their different natures, so all the language (had not *man* “sinned, and come short of the Glory of God”) would be perfectly significant and expressive of the Subject intended to be communicated. Nor was it *man* as “renewed in the Spirit of *his* mind.” The Apostle would not reject such *Eloquence*; he was sensible, that such as had undergone this gracious change had true *wisdom*; and, as far as *renewed*, that their hearts *taught* their *mouths*, “and *added* learning to *their* lips.” We are certain, that to those persons, *Christ was not a stumbling block*, nor “the preaching of the Cross foolishness;” nor would the *speech* of such a Person seem *rude* and *contemptible* to them, as it appeared to the unbelieving Jews and Greeks: (1 Cor. i. 22, 23.) for the *wisdom* of *man* at best, as a fallen creature, is more or less attended with *folly*—The wisest of men are liable to “err in vision, and stumble in judgment;” Isaiah xxviii. 7.—But by MAN, in the foregoing Passage, is to be understood—MAN in a state of nature—the natural man in general; in particular, those Greeks and false Teachers who were “*become vain in their imaginations*,” and, too much like their hearts and lives, *corrupt* in their *Eloquence*.

2. We come to enquire into the true *nature* and *character* of the ELOQUENCE which the Apostle disclaimed in *preaching* the Gospel; and here, without enlarging upon the Subject, we shall confine ourselves to what he expressly declares in his Writings to the Church of Corinth, comprehended in this passage—“not in the words which *man’s wisdom* teacheth”

(1 Cor.



(1 Cor. ii. 13.)—or “Wisdom of Words” (1 Cor. i. 17.)—The “enticing words of man’s wisdom” (1 Cor. ii. 4.)—or “Excellency of Speech;” 1 Cor. ii. 1. Now let us put these passages together, and the sum will appear to be this—that the *Eloquence* of those persons among the Jews and Greeks, at that time, which the Apostle here refuses, like the love of the formalist, consisted more *in word and in tongue, than in deed and in truth*; more in appearance than in reality; more in sound than in sense. This was the case with the false Teachers, of whom he was so jealous in his Epistle to the Colossians—“lest any man should beguile you with enticing words;” Col. ii. 4.—Such was the *character* of their *Eloquence*; they dazzled, not *enlightened* their understandings; deceived, not *convinced* their judgments, nor *directed* the affections, which they raised in their Hearers, to their proper objects; but put them off with pompous sounds, “great swelling words of vanity,” instead of true, real, solid, and substantial *Eloquence*. This seems to be the *character* of the *Language* that Paul here refuses. On the other hand, the *Eloquence* of the Apostles did not consist in mere words, nor in their artful compositions, though they certainly used the best *Language*—“Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. ii. 13.) *but it consisted* also in the *things* which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man”—*things* of infinite and everlasting importance to their Hearers—“which Angels *themselves* desire to look into.”

True ELOQUENCE is concerned not only with the fancy and affections, but the understanding, will, memory, and conscience—with the whole soul; and that must necessarily be imperfect, which is not addressed to the one as well as the other, especially where Truth, all-important *Truth*, which is absolutely necessary to be known, in order to *become wise unto Salvation*—

*Salvation*—where Holiness, without which there can be no enjoyment of real and substantial happiness, is concerned. This brings us to shew,

3. That the Apostles had sufficient REASONS for not forming their Discourses upon the plan of human *Eloquence*; they preached the Gospel—"not with wisdom of words;" why? saith Paul (as though he dreaded the consequences) "lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Cor. i. 17.)—lest the great and wonderful things contained in the Gospel, the sum of which is "Jesus Christ and him crucified"—lest the *counsels* of Heaven should be hid and *darkened* with "words without knowledge"—lest the Cross of Christ should be deprived of its just honours, and precious immortal souls should receive no spiritual advantage. Agreeably to this, he adds—"that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. ii. 5.) that it might never be said, that the *wisdom* of the Preacher was the ground or reason of their faith; but that the energy of the Holy Spirit, which influenced them in their glorious Work, wrought both in and with them, and by his Divine Power, with heavenly demonstration, accompanied the Word preached to the hearts of the Hearers; so that they believed not because their Preachers were wise, learned, or *eloquent* (as was the case with some of them) but because their Doctrines were clearly proved to be infallibly true, and infinitely important, on which their whole Salvation depended.

The sum of all the reasons seems to be this—To humble and take away pride from man—To exalt "Jesus Christ and him crucified"—To *glorify* God—and make a clear and ample discovery of his *Wisdom* and *Power* in the Salvation of Sinners.

After all that has been advanced upon this Head, though we may not be able exactly to determine the entire

entire sense of the Apostle here, yet we may venture at least to say, that he did not disclaim true *Eloquence*, any more than *sound Wisdom* :—No ; this is a *Gift*, which he not only earnestly *covets* and prays for himself, but blesses and praises God for, in behalf of the Church (1 Cor. i. 4, 5.) the very *Gift*, for which Apollos is so renowned and celebrated as an *e'loquent* man : Nay ; his own writings evidently discover some of the greatest *Wisdom* and *Eloquence* ; nor did Christ or his Apostles ever forbid the use of either. In reality, there is more true *Wisdom* and *Eloquence* in the Scriptures, than in all other books united together.—But this brings us to consider,

II. The *positive* part of the Subject, that by “ACCEPTABLE WORDS” may be understood — WORDS “which the Holy Ghost teacheth.”—It is granted, that this Passage chiefly respects the Divine *Eloquence*, which the inspired Apostles were so highly favoured with, in an extraordinary manner, for the confirmation and spreading of the Gospel ; so that it was not so much *they* who spake, as the Spirit of their Father that spake in them ; whereby, upon every emergency, they were “enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge ;” and had “a mouth and wisdom, which *their* adversaries *could never* gainsay, nor resist” (1 Cor. i. 5. Luke xxi. 15.)—extraordinary assistance for extraordinary occasions ; nevertheless it is apprehended, that we may gather enough from this part of Scripture to serve all our purposes upon the Subject under consideration.

Here would be a proper place to shew the inimitable beauties and transcendent excellencies of the *Style* and *Language* of the sacred Writers, and the various kinds and characters of *Eloquence* made use of by them, according to the Subjects, Persons, and Occasions, which presented themselves ; but this would carry us beyond the intended bounds of our Work.

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We shall therefore confine our views chiefly to the express directions given by the Holy Ghost on this Head, and followed by Christ and his Apostles in *preaching* the Gospel.

The "ACCEPTABLE WORDS"—"which the Holy Ghost *in Scripture* teacheth" all the Ministers of Christ to use, depend *entirely* upon the nature and importance of the things to be handled—the concern of our Hearers with those things—and the characters we sustain. The *Style* and *Language* of a Minister of Christ should be *proportionate* (*i. e.*) more plain or adorned—slow or swift—concise or copious—cool or warm—humble or elevated—agreeable to the nature of the Subject, and the occasion and design of his Discourse.

This might be considered (1st) in a more general way, wherein might be shewn, that our *Language* must be PURE—"sound speech, that cannot be condemned;" and at the same time PLAIN—"Words easy to be understood:" and inasmuch as the Gospel of Christ is of a spiritual nature, and of infinite importance to be known by our Hearers, it evidently follows, that this *Language* is indispensably necessary, and should run through the whole of our Discourses.

Secondly. The Minister of Christ, who falls in with the plan of Divine *Eloquence*, will be more especially concerned, as was before observed, to suit his *Language* to the different Subjects he has occasion to handle, and the concern of his Auditory with these things. We shall speak something upon each of these Heads, and begin with a general account of the *Style*, which the Divine Spirit teaches all the Ministers of Christ to use, through the whole of their Discourses.—This is,

1st. PURE.—The original standard of all *Purity*, in *Sentiment*, *Conception*, *Affection*, and *Expression*, is the Nature, Word, and Works of God.

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The soul of man, in a state of innocence, bore a perfect resemblance hereto ; but since the Fall, it may be said with deep lamentation — “ *this* Glory is departed from *the creatures*.” But what was at first *written on the heart*, the Lord hath been graciously pleased to write in a Book, that blessed *Book*, called, by way of eminence, the Bible, the Old and New Testament, a conformity to which in our *Language* is absolutely necessary. “ The Word of the Lord (saith David) is very PURE ” — “ *like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times* ” — it is perfectly free from all *corruption* : Psalm xviii. 30. cxix. 140. xii. 6. xix. 8. Prov. xxx. 5. — “ Holy men of *old* spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; ” 2 Pet. i. 21. The Holy Scripture is the pure breath of God. As God at first “ breathed into *man’s* nostrils the breath of life, and *he* became a living soul ; ” in like manner the same God *breathes* in all the Writings of the Old and New Testament ; so that not only the *Matter*, or *Things*, but the *Language* or *Words*, in which those *Things* are expressed, is of God — *Words* “ which the Holy Ghost teacheth. ” — Not only *choice* and *proper*, but *decent* EXPRESSIONS — “ sound speech that cannot be condemned ” — are necessary. The Preacher, who conforms to this rule, even when he is obliged to make use of the most unpleasing images, in order to excite the hatred and abhorrence of his Hearers to any thing sinful, will at the same time carefully avoid every thing in his Phrases and *Expressions*, which hath the least tendency to raise any ideas in their minds contrary to the spirituality of the Gospel. Yes ; he knows and is concerned, that “ HOLINESS TO THE LORD ” ought to be the motto — That “ HOLINESS TO THE LORD ” should be *engraven*, not only upon his sentiments and affections, but on all his *Expressions*. — Yet it is not enough, that our Language

be *pure*; it may be entirely free, not only from grammatical and rhetorical Blemishes, but also from moral corruption, from all indelicacy and indecency, considered in itself, and still be very far from being *profitable*. The best, the most *pure* and *refined* STYLE and LANGUAGE may be useless, except it be intelligible to our Hearers.—It must therefore not only be *pure*, but also,

2d. PLAIN.—By a *plain* Style here is not intended a mean, low way and manner of expression, nor the want of proper ornaments; but “words easy to be understood”—such as are consistent with “the simplicity that is in Christ,” and calculated to give a clear, free, and open *manifestation of the truth as it is in Jesus*; like the Apostle, we had need to “use great plainness of speech.”—This is not opposite to true sublimity and majesty of sentiment, nor the strongest and most ardent affections, nor the grandest and most beautiful forms of expression, on *proper* Subjects; for sometimes this rich attire, like the *Holy Garments* divinely appointed “for Aaron, for Glory, and for Beauty,” are altogether suitable and becoming, as we find in many parts of Scripture; especially, if we *desire* not only to instruct our Hearers in the knowledge of the *great* “mystery of Godliness,” but to impress and affect their hearts with the dignity, grandeur, and importance of the Subject.—The inspired Psalmist commands us to *praise* the adorable Object of our Worship “according to his excellent Greatness;” Psalm cl. 2. Hence we safely conclude, that not only human reason, but Divine Revelation teaches us to ascend as high as possible (and we need not fear soaring too high) in our thoughts, affections, and expressions, in proportion to the sublimity and grandeur of the Subject. Here, alas! the *Language* of mortals, raised even to the highest pitch, sinks infinitely too low.



low. The *Language* of the burning Seraphims which surround *the Throne of Glory*—the *Language* of the angelic Host, who stand and sing in his Presence—can never reach the wonderful heights of him “who humbleth himself to behold the things that are *done* in Heaven,” and who “is exalted above all Blessing and Praise.”

But if ever we desire to instruct, as well as affect, we must not go beyond the capacities of our Hearers; the more necessary the things we speak are to be known, the greater need there is of their being made *plain, clear, and easy*; and surely, if there be any Subjects in Earth or Heaven of importance to our Hearers, they are the Holy Scriptures; *these* “are able to make *us* wise unto Salvation;” 2 Tim. iii. 16.

One, who was “brought up at the feet of Gamaliel,” and “caught up to the third Heavens”—one, who could not be supposed to be destitute either of human or Divine learning—an inspired Man, whose Writings we justly respect, as infallible, when speaking against *praying and preaching in the Church*, “in an unknown tongue,” sufficiently proves, and beautifully illustrates this part of our Subject, by the comparison that he makes between the use of *musical instruments* and of *Language in Preaching*.—“Even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.” 1 Cor. xiv. 7—9. Thus as a certain *distinction* in the *sounds* of these instruments is essential, in order to understand the tunes which are played, so are “words easy to be understood” absolutely necessary to comprehend *the things which are spoken*. And if it be just to argue

the greater from the less, it may be added, that by how much the pleasures of Christianity, and the advantages of engaging and succeeding in the spiritual warfare, are superior to all those worldly delights and concerns, by so much the more needful is the use of *plain, distinct, certain, significant, and determinate* LANGUAGE, in *blowing* the silver trumpet, in warning the People to *prepare* for the *spiritual warfare*, and animating and comforting them in their march through the Wilderness to Immanuel's land. And as those would be deemed but poor musicians, whose sounds are confused and uncertain, so likewise those must be very defective in their duty, who do not speak to the understanding of their Hearers, that they may *know the joyful sound* of the glorious Gospel, and *prepare* for the *heavenly warfare*. Let it be supposed, that such a Minister is preaching to a Congregation, where many, if not the most part of the People, are ignorant and illiterate — how shall they *know* “the things which belong unto *their* peace,” while they are thrown all into confusion, and left in doubt and uncertainty, which must be the case where this important rule of the Apostle is not followed? What Paul saith of *Prayer* is equally applicable to *Preaching*—“Thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified;” 1 Cor. xiv. 17. How shall the Scriptures be opened, confirmed, illustrated, or improved? “My People (saith God) are destroyed for lack of knowledge;” Hosea iv. 6. But how shall they avoid destruction? How shall they ever find this knowledge by our Ministry, if this important mean is neglected? We will suppose, that the *Language* of the Minister is *pure* and *proper* to the Subject—the best Grammarian, the most eloquent Rhetorician, or the most learned Divine, had it been delivered in an Academy or a College, could find no fault therein; nay, they must approve and applaud

plaud the whole; but it happens here, that a company of precious and immortal souls are assembled,—they are *perishing* “for lack of knowledge”—one grand essential thing is wanting—one Divinely appointed medium of its communication is neglected—poor creatures, they do not *understand* their Preacher—why? He doth not use “Words easy to be understood”—he doth not “condescend to men of low estate”—and so the People may live and die in their sins, as to any help they can receive, in an ordinary way, from such *Language*. May God in mercy deliver us from this haughty conduct, and all our Congregations from the dreadful consequences thereof!

If then we wish to be useful to others — if we are desirous of giving the sense of the Divine Word, so as to cause our People to *understand* the reading—if we would *make the vision plain*, so “that he may run that readeth it”—that “way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein”—let us shun, as much as possible, whatever hath a tendency to obscure and *darken counsel*, confuse or perplex the minds of our Hearers, or leave them in doubt and uncertainty about the true *sense* of the things which are meant to be communicated. It is not sufficient, that we ourselves *understand* the Words which are spoken, but we must make use of such *Language* as our Hearers *understand*. Let us, by close and careful study and meditation, labour after a full *Knowledge* of our Subject, and the capacities of our People, that, when we come forth, we may be the happy means, as lights in the world, like the natural Sun, of dispelling the gloom and darkness which may seem at any time to surround our Subject; let us “condescend to men of low estate,” and labour not only to speak so as to be *understood*, but, as much as possible, to put it out of the power of all our Hearers to  
*misunderstand*



*misunderstand* us. This is what is meant by a *plain Style*—"Words easy to be understood"—"great plainness of speech;" and herein consists the Excellency of our Expression, in all those parts of our Sermons where Instruction is principally intended.

But both those—a *pure* and *plain* STYLE—are not only useful and necessary, but they agree best together: for as a Preacher may use the *PUREST* Style and *Language* in itself, and yet not be understood by his Hearers, which renders it useless and unprofitable, so, on the other hand, we have now shewn, that he may *speak very plain*, and be "easy to be understood," and yet not *speak as he ought*, except he hath a regard to the *PURITY* of his *Language*. But when a Minister condescends to the capacity of his Hearers, and at the same time maintains the *PURITY* of *Language*, and the *DIGNITY* of his Subject (for it is supposed, that his *Subject* is great and important) there is then a real Beauty and true Sublimity in this *Gospel Simplicity*—a *Style* worthy of general approbation and universal imitation: for this reason, the Apostle so highly prizes it; it was this made him say—"In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue;" 1 Cor. xiv. 19.—We now proceed to consider,

III. More particularly, that the *ACCEPTABLE WORDS* "which the Holy Ghost teacheth" us in Scripture, are *proper* and *suitable* to the *different Subjects*, which we may have occasion to treat of—the various *Capacities* of our Hearers—and the *Design* of our Discourse; but it is not intended to enlarge on any of these: we shall only make a few observations upon the *Language* of a Preacher, as principally addressed to the other *Powers* of the human soul.

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As it hath been already shewn in general, that the **ACCEPTABLE WORDS**, "which the Holy Ghost teacheth" us in the Divine Word, are *pure* and *plain*, or "sound speech that cannot be condemned," and "Words easy to be **UNDERSTOOD**," we come to consider, in

The last place, the *Language* as addressed to the *Ear*, or to speak something of **HARMONIOUS STYLE**—that those **ACCEPTABLE WORDS**, "which the Holy Ghost teacheth" us in the Sacred Oracles, are such as are most adapted to convey the sense and spirit of our Subject, through the *Ear*, into the hearts and souls of our Auditory. Accordingly, not only the *sense*, but the *sound* of our *Words* might be considered; although it is not our design to enlarge, only as it comes in the way, we shall not entirely pass it by. In this place, it may not be amiss to turn back to the consideration of the sin and Fall of our first Parents: The *Ear* was the *sense*, we may call it the door or gate, through which the enemy of God and our souls, by his infernal Eloquence, obtained admission into the palace of the heart. Here let us pause, and admire the Wisdom of God in his grand design to overthrow Satan's hellish device; for through the very same avenue that sin and death entered into the world, Heaven hath ordained, that righteousness and life should enter!—"Faith cometh by **HEARING**;" Rom. x. 17. The *Ear* is the only judge of *sounds*. What is said in the Book of Job is literally true—"The **EAR** trieth words, as the mouth tasteth food" (Job xxxiv. 3.) it trieth the *sound* of words by its own natural capacity, in union with the *understanding*, as far as it is perfect; and the understanding is *tried* by the *Ear*, as far as it is instructed. But it is often more concerned for pleasure than profit, so that we had need *make a covenant with our EARS*, not to take up our happiness in

in *sound* without sense, or prefer *harmonious* composition to sensible and spiritual Discourses, where this may be wanting; for the deficiency is not of such a nature as to exclude any, whose *Ears* are not particularly attuned to *harmony*, either from Christ, or his service in the Ministry: this is only a caution by the way. It is certain, that *melody in our hearts*, and *harmony* in our lives, are of infinite importance; and are most acceptable to God and profitable to man. Indeed, it is this that must fit us for that blessed Society where no *discord*, not one *jarring string*, will ever be found to all eternity. Yet as *harmony* in itself is not only innocent and entertaining, but suitable to that *sense*, which our Maker hath been pleased to bestow upon us, in order to judge of sounds, and every person who hath this *organ* in any degree of perfection is naturally, and may be innocently pleased with *harmony* in composition, we must adapt our *speech* to the particular and respective capacities and circumstances of mankind—we must *seek*, like the Wise Man, “to find out ACCEPTABLE WORDS;” *such*, for the most part, as are not only “EASY to be understood,” but *easily* pronounced—“*Words of Delight*” (Eccles. xii. 10.) to detain the Ear for a greater, nobler, and better purpose—to gain admission into the heart—to *win* the soul for Christ. And though mankind by nature, in spiritual things, too much resemble “the deaf adder, which will not hearken to the voice of Charmers, charming never so wisely” (Psalm lviii. 4, 5.)—though (like the Jews, who sat under the *eloquent* Ezekiel, who was as the “Song of one that *had* a pleasant voice, and *could* play well on an instrument;” Ezek. xxxiii. 32.) they *bear* our *Words*, but will not *do* them; yet we are hereby convinced, that the best *Style* and *Language* will not effect the *Work*, without “the Lord WORKING with us.” Paul may *plant*, and

*Apollos*



*Apollos water* ; but God must *give the increase* ; 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Nevertheless this is no reason why we should not make use of ACCEPTABLE WORDS.

There is a certain Faculty, which should not be entirely overlooked.—The *Preacher*, who, like the Wise Man, uses ACCEPTABLE WORDS, will not suffer this wonderful Power of the Soul (we mean the *Fancy*) to rove and range after meaner objects for want of employment ; but, in subserviency to his grand Design, endeavour to captivate and engage it in the service of Christ, about the most substantial, weighty, and important Realities ; and sure he hath sufficient materials for this purpose.—The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Heavens, the Earth, the Sea, and all things therein—the Works of God, and the Word of God, afford sufficient room for the strongest, warmest, most fruitful and sublime imagination. Here we are authorized, from the practice of a greater than Solomon, as well as the Apostles and Prophets, to call in *all* nature, and *all* Scripture to our assistance ; in order to represent our Subjects in the most awful or amiable colours ; by figures and images of various kinds—to bring near, and realize those great, tremendous, wonderful, and glorious things, which, ever since the Fall, mankind, by nature, are apt to forget, neglect, or put at the farthest distance oftentimes (dreadful thought !) to the ruin of soul and body for ever.

And as the various Subjects, which we are to present time after time to the view of our Hearers, are not matters of mere speculation or indifference, but such as enter into the very life and spirit of Christianity, and interest the whole man ; as they are objects which ought to affect our hearts with love or hatred, hope or fear, joy or sorrow, zeal, compassion, or admiration ;—in a word, all the *Powers* of our Souls in the greatest degree ;—it hence appears just and rea-

sonable, that the Minister of Christ, above all others, should use the most *pathetical* and *sublime* LANGUAGE. Agreeable to this, the Holy Scriptures hath abundantly supplied us with every thing that can possibly be essential for all spiritual and Divine purposes.

It now remains, according to the Plan laid down, to present a View of *the best manner of DELIVERING a Sermon*; and this is intended in the following Chapter, which will bring the Whole of this *Work* to a conclusion.

## CHAP.

## C H A P. XII.

## ON THE ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT.

THE BEST-MANNER OF DELIVERING A SERMON, as it relates to the *Voice, Countenance, and Gesture*, more particularly enquired into, opened, and illustrated.---This should be entirely governed by the *Subject, Occasion, and Design* of our Discourse.---The whole of our Manner, both internal and external, as far as it is just and natural, grows out of the Matter, as the *Stock, Branches, Leaves, and Fruits* of a Tree from its Root, or as *Water* flows from a Fountain.---The several Parts, which enter into the Composition, the *Thoughts, Affections, Spirit, Temper, and Disposition* of our Minds, the *Language and Delivery*, should all be cast into this Mould---or, in other Words, to speak more fully---our *Text, Sentiments, Affections, Expressions---Tongue, Head, Face, Eyes, Hands---every Look, Feature, and Motion*, in Soul and Body, should all harmonize in speaking only one and the same Thing.---The Whole of this Subject comprehended in three Words — PROPORTION, DISTINCTION, VARIATION.

A VIEW of Divine ELOQUENCE in general, and of the *Style and Language* most becoming the Pulpit, hath already been presented; we are now, agreeably to the Plan laid down, come to consider the best manner of delivering a Sermon. In order to shew more fully the Use and Importance of this Part of our Subject, we might here suppose, a Minister of Christ to have fixed upon one of the most sacred Articles of Religion; that he hath carefully arranged



every part in the best method and order, and “*sought out* (like the *Preacher* from the Throne) *acceptable* (nay, we will add, the *most acceptable*) *Words* ;” yet, after all, his Discourse may be in a great measure spoiled, for want of being *well delivered* : with reverence, we might say, this is often the case in *reading the Holy Scriptures*. What an astonishing difference is there between a person’s reading a Chapter, who is destitute of the Powers of Oratory, and neither understands nor feels what he says, and one, who is possessed of this talent, and enters into the mind of God, and the spirit of his Subject ! This is too manifest to need any long proof.

Before we proceed any farther, it might be observed, consistent with the whole of this Plan, and the mind of the greatest Orators in every age, the necessity, the indispensable necessity, of understanding and entering into the spirit of our Subject ; — of having our hearts, by Reading, Meditation, and Prayer, like Ezra, Elihu, David, and Paul, properly *affected* with the weight and importance of those spiritual and Divine things, which we are about to *deliver* ; and of the infinite worth of the souls of our Hearers, which we desire to instruct or edify. The Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls (*he who spake as never man spake* ; John vii. 46.) declares, that “ out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ;” Matt. xii. 34. Hence the propriety of a very common saying — “ that which proceedeth *from*, is most likely to go *to* the heart.”

The fewer principles any art or science are reduced to, the more easily it is understood, and the longer remembered : and as the whole of what is to be offered upon the Subject, may be comprehended in PROPORTION, DISTINCTION, and VARIATION, according to the Plan laid down ; we shall now proceed, and begin with,

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I. PROPORTION. By *Proportion* is meant an *answerableness*, or *conformity*, not only in the *Subject* of all our Discourses to the Oracles of God, which hath been already considered; but in the whole *manner* of our DELIVERY, to the *Subject-Matter*, *Occasion*, and *Design* of our Discourse, and the *state* and *circumstances* of our Hearers.

The *Subject* and *Occasion*.—"Every thing (saith the Wisest of Men) is beautiful in its *Season*;" Eccles. iii. 11. And true *Wisdom*, the only safe Guide, and Counsellor of *Eloquence*, teacheth its possessor to discern both Time and Judgment. Whether it be a *Subject* and *Season* of mourning, and humiliation—of praise, and thanksgiving—or whatever be the *occasion*; a judicious Minister will suit his *manner* accordingly: And although different kinds of *Eloquence* will necessarily be employed in the various parts of his Discourse, yet a *correspondent manner* will be predominant, and gain the ascendancy over the rest; as far as he understands, feels, and enters into the Nature, Occasion, and Design of his Subject: like the blessed Apostle, who "*wept* with them that *wept*;" or rather his Divine Master, when "he beheld the City" of Jerusalem, and his whole soul bursted out in the tenderest and most compassionate exclamation — "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. xxiii. 37. Luke xiii. 34. xix. 41, 42. Yes; Christ felt what he said; every Word was heart-deep, every Word full of sympathetic lamentation, mourning, and woe.

On the other hand; is it a time and season of praise and thanksgiving? Agreeably to this rule, *different sentiments*, *different affections*; and, upon the whole,

whole, a *different manner* and *kind* of ELOQUENCE will naturally and necessarily prevail.

We would farther just observe on this Head, that not only the *Subject*, *Occasion*, and *Design*, but the CIRCUMSTANCES of a Minister's Hearers, if he *speaks as he ought to speak*, will, more or less, affect his *manner*; for Religion by no means destroys those distinctions which God hath made here in this world amongst mankind, whether in a natural, providential, spiritual, civil, or ecclesiastical respect; but it authorizes, encourages, and commands the observance of them all; and so, as far as we are under its influence, we shall be concerned, like the Prophets and Apostles, to address our Hearers accordingly; that is to say, our Superiors with reverence, our Equals with familiarity, our Inferiors with condescension, and *all* with Wisdom, Love, and Faithfulness.—But we shall not enlarge here.—As the things, which we have occasion to speak of, time after time, are *different* from each other, so PROPORTION justly requires,

II. A DISTINCTION in the whole method, according to the difference that subsists in the Subject-Matter.—What is to be understood by DISTINCTION, as applied to the ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT, is to utter ourselves in such a manner, that all we speak may be easily heard or understood; and the whole of our Discourse comprehended; according to the precept of Paul, in 1 Cor. xiv. 7. that there must be “a DISTINCTION in the Sound;” and, agreeable to the Example of Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, “*who taught the People,*” and “*read in the Book, in the Law of God DISTINCTLY, and gave the sense, and caused the People to understand the reading;*” Neh. viii. 8, 9. It is admitted, that the inspired Penmen are here declaring, in what manner they *read*, and not in what manner they *preached*; yet if  
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the truth be thoroughly examined upon this Subject, it will be found, that there is so near a connexion between *speaking well*, and *reading well*, as to authorize the propriety of our application of this part of the Divine Word, to the Subject which we are considering.

A person who *reads well*, as far as he understands and enters into the spirit of the Author, utters himself with all that freedom, ease, and energy, as if he had been speaking the more immediate sentiments and affections of his own mind upon the Subject: On the other hand, as far as he *speaks well*, he delivers himself with equal propriety, as well as force and energy, with the best of readers.

The question that naturally presents itself on this Head is—By what means, may a Minister of Christ most effectually attain this important part of ELOQUENCE? We answer—To begin at the foundation of all, *as* Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division, are the basis of Arithmetick, *so* the common Rules, proposed by almost every Writer upon the Subject of Rhetorick, seem to lay a solid foundation for all ELOQUENCE, as well as the whole excellence of Delivery. And as Letters, Syllables, Words, and Sentences, comprehend the whole of our Discourses, as it respects the Language of Art; we shall just mention a few Rules, and make some Observations thereon, chiefly as they relate to DISTINCTION; we mean—the PITCH or KEY of the Voice—PRONUNCIATION—ARTICULATION—ACCENT—EMPHASIS—CADENCE—and PAUSES.

First. PITCH or KEY.—If we mean to *speak well*, we must have a due regard to the PITCH or KEY of *our Voice*, so as to be heard without any difficulty; and at the same time to be able to RISE or FALL *higher or lower* with equal ease, according to our Subject. If we PITCH *too high*, we lose the reins and govern-

government of our *Voice*, and that variety which is essential to harmony. If we *PITCH too low*, we shall not be heard, and then our Auditors will lose part of the Subject: the *medium* is best in general: but the Place we speak in, the Distance of our Hearers, and the Powers of Voice which we possess, must determine this.

Second. PRONUNCIATION, or the manner of *sounding* our Words.—Although we are not required, like the Ephraimites, to *pronounce* the Word SHIBBOLETH, at the peril of our lives, it is nevertheless of importance, if we mean to *speak well*, and would not at least divert the attention of our Hearers from the things we speak, to call them by true and proper names; we mean such as are established by the practice of the most learned and *eloquent* of mankind. This is in some places difficult to attain; however we may find it worth our notice to draw up a catalogue of all the words which we may have occasion to *pronounce*, especially those in Scripture, and so have recourse to the best *pronouncing* Dictionaries, if we should not have an opportunity to hear them spoke by those who are acquainted with the best manner of *sounding* the same.

Third. ARTICULATION.—In our ARTICULATION, in order to guard against the extremes of being *too swift*, or *too slow*, we should carefully distinguish the *Syllables* from one another, by a due *proportion* of SOUND in the utterance. The *best cure* for a Voice that is too swift, hasty, and precipitate, consists in a close attention to the Nature, Weight, and Importance of the Subject; especially when we are speaking of the most solemn things. The *best cure* for a lifeless and tiresome *utterance* and *pronunciation*, is a close application to the zeal and activity of God; we speak here only in general; what we say must direct us in this, as well as in every other part of

ELOQUENCE;

ELOQUENCE ; for sometimes such is the nature of the Subject, that it is difficult for some to speak *too fast* ; at other times for others to speak *too slow*.

Fourth. ACCENT.—Here we shall not enlarge ; but be a little more particular, just in hinting a few things concerning its Nature, Use, and the most effectual Means of acquiring *proper* ACCENT.

1. As to its *Nature*.—It is well known, that we understand by it, *that* SYLLABLE in a word on which the Speaker dwells longer than on any other.

2. As to its *Use*.—This doth not respect the change of notes, as higher or lower ; but settles the due Measure, Proportion, and Variation of Time, in the Delivery. This *Proportion*, as longer or shorter, arises from the place of its seat, whether on the Vowel or Consonant. It is ACCENT that distinguishes *Words* from mere *Syllables* ; and unites the *Syllables* which are in the same together, and renders a Discourse more harmonious. If we read or speak without any ACCENT, we lose all the *Propriety* and *Beauty* of the Sentence ; nothing is left but mere sound : and if we had not known the Sense of it before, we should never know it by such an unmeaning way : or if we place the ACCENT wrong, it is easy to perceive the want of *Harmony*.

3. As to *Means*.—Writers upon the Subject propose the following Rules — One is, whenever the ACCENT is on the Consonant, the Vowel has a short sound : the other is, that no Vowel ever hath a long sound in an *unaccented* Syllable : and they tell us, that if this were properly adjusted, it would prove a master-key to the *Pronunciation* of our whole tongue ; and therefore in our public Ministrations, we should lay the *same* sort of ACCENT on our *Words*, as in common Discourse : but where doubt arises, we may consult the Ear.

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Fifth.



Fifth. EMPHASIS.—This serves to mark and distinguish both the Sense and Strength of the Expression, or the Meaning and Force of what is said. A right *Emphasis* in speaking, greatly depends upon rightly understanding the Subject; and, by the use of proper *Emphasis*, our Hearers are assisted in comprehending and feeling the same: without it, we are likely either to leave them in the dark, or lead them astray from the Sense and Spirit of our Discourse. We shall therefore give an example or two of the Utility, Necessity, and Importance of just *Emphasis* from the Holy Scriptures; both as it relates to the Understanding and the Affections.

1st. As it respects the *Understanding*, Sense and Meaning of our Subject. — “We are also his offspring,” saith Paul; Acts xvii. 28. Here, although the principal *Emphasis*, according to the connexion, seems to be upon the word HIS (*i. e.* “We are the offspring of God”) yet, without the least injury to the Sense, we may consider every word as *emphatical*: for instance—if the *Emphasis* be placed upon the word WE, it points out *who* the Persons are, which are called “the offspring of God:” If it be laid on the word ARE, it positively asserts the Truth of the Expression: If it is placed on the word ALSO, it implieth, that we are not the *only* Persons; but we express our claim as well as others: If it is on the word HIS, it points us to our *Creator*: and if on the word OFFSPRING, we are led from plain to figurative Language; and by a beautiful trope, derived from a tree or fountain; to consider our relation *to*, and dependence *upon* God for every Blessing; as the branches depend upon the root, or waters flow from the fountain.

2d. An example of *emphatical* Language; addressed not only to the Reason and Understanding, but more especially to the Affections; may be taken from

from the question, which our blessed Lord once put to his Disciples, when many who followed him before forsook him — “WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY;” saith Christ; John vi. 67. *Every* word in *this* Sentence is *emphatical*; but the word YE seems the principal. If we lay the chief *Emphasis* on the word WILL; we derive this sense—Are you come to a point about the matter? Is your heart determined to “follow a multitude to do evil?” If on the word YE; it is as much as though he had said, YE, my Disciples, whom I have taken under my wing; whom I have taught and instructed in the way of Life and Salvation; consider the profession that you have made; your Character, your Dependence upon your Master; the Obligations you lay under; the Expectations you have from me: If on the word ALSO; the Sense is this—if others, who are utterly unacquainted with the Nature and Design of my coming into the world; strangers to my Doctrine, and its glorious Tendency—if they forsake me; consider that you have “put *your* hand to the plough”—Will you look back? SUCH are not “fit for the Kingdom of God.” And if we place the *Emphasis* on the words GO AWAY; fresh matter immediately opens, which is of the greatest Concern and Importance—Will you leave your Master? Are you willing to relinquish all claim to my Care, Love, Tenderneſs, Protection, and Salvation? What iniquity have you found in me? Have I ever disappointed your just and reasonable hopes? Have I ever been a barren Wilderness to *you*, my Disciples? Can you find a better Master? Will your Adversary the Devil; the World, or Sin, promise and perform what I make over to you in the New Testament? What can Earth, what can Heaven itself do for you? “If *you* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in *you* :” and can you *bear* my departure from you?

Can you *bear* to hear me pronounce the tremendous Sentence in “the Judgment of the Great Day”—“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire?”

But it is not here intended to enter at large into the Sense and Spirit of this tender and affecting Passage: It is hoped, that the little which hath been said already, is not only consistent with the chief design of Christ, in the beforementioned important Question, and speaks the fulness and variety of matter contained therein; but that it sheweth, in some measure, the Utility, Necessity, Beauty, and Importance of just and proper *Emphasis*. We say, with the design of Christ: for it is this that points out the *Emphasis*: and a knowledge of the chief design naturally leads into the understanding of all those words which are most *emphatical*: hence when a man reads or speaks what he understands and feels, and enters into its design, we have, for the most part, just and proper *Emphasis*.

3d. Another example and specimen of *emphatical* Language, as addressed peculiarly to the *affections*, may be selected from the last words of the great Apostle’s justly admired, excellent, and eloquent Speech before King Agrippa, which is recorded in Acts xxvi. 29.—“I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and **ALTOGETHER** such as I am, except these bonds.” Let it be here supposed, if possible, for a man to read or repeat these words, without any *Emphasis* (and indeed it is not only possible, but probable, and very certain, that if a person doth not understand, and enter into the Apostle’s Spirit, he may divest it of all its Beauty and Energy, were he to pronounce the same as we would found the Letters in the Alphabet—A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, V, U, W, X, Y, Z.)



Y, Z.) Where is that heavenly solemnity—"I would to God?" Where is that noble generosity? Where is that diffusive benevolence, forgiveness, love, and tenderness of heart, towards his enemies, contained in those words—"Not only thou, but also all that hear me this day?" Where is that strong, expressive, weighty, affectionate, and affecting manner, that runs through the whole? Where is that Christ-like tenderness (may it not be said—politeness and heavenly ingenuousness) which appears in the last clause of the Sentence—"Except these bonds?" It is all vanished—lost—gone.

On the other hand, let us *realize* the *Apostle's* words, enter into their Sense and Spirit, and shew in what manner it is most probable he delivered himself—"I would to God."—May it not here be imagined, that the blessed Apostle was overawed—not particularly by the sight and presence of King Agrippa (though doubtless he paid him all the honour that was due) but by the Divine Majesty, the King of Kings—with his eyes devoutly lifted up to Heaven, his hand upon his heart, and then affectionately cast upon Agrippa, with his right-hand taken off from his bosom, and pointed towards him, when he pronounced the word THOU? And is it not natural to suppose, that the Apostle looked with that—"Charity, *that* suffereth long—beareth all things—endureth all things," upon his Hearers—that when he came to the word ALL, he laid a particular *stress* upon it?—And that when he pronounced the word ALTOGETHER, he spoke it with great and ardent desire?—that when he came to the words "SUCH AS I AM," he gave an *Emphasis* expressive of the deepest humility, upon the account of what he once was; and the most lively gratitude for the glorious change and revolution which had taken place in himself, in the Church, and in the world—*which his eyes had seen,*  
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*his ears heard, and his heart conceived*, would continue even to the end of time?—and that he also gently laid his right-hand again upon his breast, and then, with tenderness and affection, both hands and eyes pointing to his chains, said—“ Except these bonds ?” What a kind, tender-hearted exception is this ! Here Savages in human shape may learn humanity ; hither clowns may resort, and learn true politeness ; and the most narrow-contracted souls have their hearts enlarged with the God-like sentiments of true, real, and genuine Christianity. Every part is exquisitely, delicately, admirably, and peculiarly adapted to make the strongest impression upon the Hearers. It is as much as though Paul had said—King Agrippa, I sincerely appeal to the heart-searching God, that I long for thy temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness—my heart is enlarged towards my fellow-creatures—“ my heart’s desire, and prayer to God for *my persecuting Brethren, as well as all the Jews*, is, that they might be saved :” nor do I wish them to be partakers of the *Cup* that my heavenly Father, in conformity to my Divine Lord, hath put into my hands ; I am resigned to it for myself ; I am his follower : “ I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day”—I expect to be in Heaven soon—I anticipate the Glories above—I *wish* you in the same state—I *wish* you the same experience : but, Agrippa, I do not *wish* to see you a prisoner at the Bar, as I am—I do not *wish* you to be in chains, as I am ; so far am I from envying your life, liberty, and happiness, that I *wish* you *all* “ the glorious liberty of the Children of God”—I *wish* to see you free from the dominion of Sin, Satan, and the World—I *wish* you a happy deliverance from a more dreadful *Curse* than my enemies *have bound themselves* under, “ that they *would* neither

eat

eat nor drink," till they had imbrued their hands in my blood—I wish you an happy and an everlasting deliverance from the tremendous *Curse* of that *Law*, which denounces eternal death upon all who are under it, and do not “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” In a few words, it is as though the Apostle had said—I wish you liberty both in soul and body: I wish you all the pleasures, but none of the pains; all the comforts, but none of the afflictions; all the joys, but none of the sorrows; all the happiness, but none of the misery; I not only wish that you may never “suffer as an evil doer,” but that you may never suffer for the Gospel—I wish you “altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

Sometimes the *last* word in the Sentence is most considerable, and requires to be pronounced in the most *emphatical* manner, as—“We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the LORD;” 2 Cor. iv. 5. Here, according to the Antithesis, the words—“But Christ Jesus the Lord” are necessarily most *emphatical*. If we go on to the 18th Verse of the same Chapter, the Voice must naturally be raised; and the infinite importance of invisible realities demands the most weighty and serious manner in the delivery of the last word—ETERNAL.

Sixth. CADENCE.—We promised to say a little upon this part of *Eloquence*—the proper falling of the Voice. All the parts of *Eloquence* jointly contribute among themselves, and unite together, in order to promote the perfection of the whole: and as the whole is ordained, and should be dedicated to the honour of Christ, and the edification of his Church, it naturally and necessarily follows, that we should never lose sight of this great end.

Sometimes the Sense and Spirit of what we speak demand a more quick and sudden close: at other times, a more easy, gradual, and deliberate CADENCE  
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—How *low* the Voice should drop in every Sentence, or part of a Sentence (keeping what we said before in our view) is best determined by the rules of *Harmony*. Harmony consists in a proportionable *Distinction* and *Variation* in the whole manner of *Delivery*; but not to enlarge here—There is one thing above all others, that we would earnestly press upon this Article—as the Congregation cannot be edified by what they cannot hear, or supply from other parts which they have heard, however interesting the things we speak may be; it is reasonable to conclude, that we should especially endeavour (even though it be at the expense of *Harmony*) to support our Voice from sinking too *low* for the People, and keep it up so *high*, as to be distinctly heard.

Seventh. PAUSES.—We are now come to the last of those important parts of *Eloquence*, which we intended to speak of, under the Head of *Distinction* (*i. e.* PAUSES)—What may justly be said of tropes and figures in Language is equally applicable to PAUSES in Delivery; they are both essential and ornamental: *essential* not only to the Preacher, but the Hearers; as to the *Preacher*, their use is certainly indispensable: the heavenly Bodies may incessantly perform their respective revolutions; the Earth may continue her motions until Time itself shall be no longer; but such is the state and constitution of its inhabitants, that they stand in absolute need of repose, time after time. The weary traveller wants rest to restore his strength, and refresh his spirits, in order to hold out to the end of his journey; so doth the *Preacher* to recover his Voice, and relieve his lungs; but this is not the only reason: Without proper PAUSES, the *Hearers* are often left in uncertainty, darkness, and confusion; so that they can neither understand the Sense, nor enter into the Spirit of the Subject—For example; as to the Sense and Meaning of what we say—Let us only  
for

for a few moments suppose, a person to utter these words of Christ—"What went ye out into the Wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" (Matt. xi. 7. Luke vii. 24.) If they be read as a question and answer (which is evidently, according to the preceding context, opposite to the Mind of our Lord) it is as much as though our Redeemer meant to signify, that John was not worth attention; that he was a fickle, unstable, inconsistent Preacher, "carried about with every wind of Doctrine." Whereas, if we consider the Passage as two questions (as it really is) the Sense clearly appears to be—a strong assertion to the contrary—that John was a person of quite a different character; that he stood firm and immovable, as "an iron pillar, or brasen walls;" that the Doctrines he *preached* were "not yea and nay, but yea and amen." But we must not enlarge.

We observed, that proper PAUSES were not only *essential*, but *ornamental*.—As rest to a labouring man is sweet, as well as necessary; so there is a real sweetness, beauty, and energy, in this silent *Eloquence*; which is often more affecting than words, especially when a Minister is going to deliver any of the most weighty, momentous, and important Expressions; a solemn PAUSE before, and sometimes another after it, hath a surprising tendency to engage the attention, to prepare the Hearer's mind for its reception, and afford some time for serious meditation.

We have already mentioned, that the Nature and Importance of our Discourse must govern every part of *Eloquence*, and consequently all the PAUSES. These are more immediately directed by the *Emphasis*, and the notes and tones of our Voice in the *Cadence*; by these means, we point out when the Sense is only suspended, or when it is entirely finished. The Ear expects, and hath a right to expect, such and *only*

such *Stops* and *Pauses* as are agreeable to the Sense we utter, or the affections we express; otherwise we disappoint and disoblige the critical Judge. But as those *Notes* and *Tones*, as well as the Conceptions and Affections, which should govern them, are almost innumerable, we shall not here attempt to enlarge, but proceed to the last part of ELOQUENCE, which was proposed to be considered, under the Head of,

III. VARIATION. — In order to speak well, we must *vary* the whole of our manner, agreeable to the *different* Subjects which we handle, the *various* parts of our Discourse, and the *different* affections, which naturally arise from them.

First. As to the *Subjects* and their *Compositions*—this hath been already spoken of.

Second. With regard to the *various* parts of our Discourse—we shall only just drop a few hints at present. Let it be supposed, that the Subject-Matter of the Discourse, from the beginning to the end, rises in its weight and importance; this climax in *Matter* and *Method* will naturally require the same in the whole of our *Manner*. Suppose a cloud to surround the *Subject*, when the Preacher enters into it: now as the Sun in the Heavens, by degrees rising higher and higher, scatters the darkness, dispels the gloom, and warms and enlivens the world with its vital influence; so let the Preacher encrease in Light, Heat, Energy, and Majesty, till he comes to the *Application*; and there especially glow, melt, and burn with the most intense zeal, sacred ardour, and heavenly vehemence; so as to possess and fill the souls of his Hearers with the deepest and most affecting sense and impression of the infinite Importance, Excellency, and Dignity of his Subject.

This gradual method here is most natural and reasonable, and bids fairest (especially if the mind is kept



kept in suspense, and not disappointed) to constrain the attention to the last. But then it must be supposed (as was before observed) that the matter from the beginning to the end rises in its weight and importance; otherwise this manner is both unnatural and improper.

Third. With respect to the different *Affections* of our minds.—In order to set this point in as clear a light as possible, we shall consider the following things.

1. What is here to be understood by *Affections*, and the *Affections* themselves.

2. Endeavour to make it clear and evident, that Religion and Christianity, above all other things, are adapted to raise the *Affections* of the soul to the highest pitch and tone — to afford the most rational and sublime entertainment, and the best, noblest work and employment for men and Angels to all eternity.

3. The *Way* and *Manner* of expressing the *Affections* on the Delivery of a Sermon.

1. What is here to be understood by *Affections*.—By *Affections* are meant all those inward motions of our nature, which are excited by the various objects we are conversant with, according to the light in which they are viewed, and appear to the mind. Here, if ever, we must make a solemn PAUSE—appeal to the mind—for it is of infinite importance, that we do not (especially in Religion, and things which belong to Salvation) mistake appearances for realities (*i. e.*) that we do not *take* “darkness for light, and light for darkness; call evil good, and good evil; put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.” Hence arises the necessity of *knowing* “the things which belong unto *our* peace”—of having our *understandings* divinely *enlightened*—to *behold* the *wonders* contained in the Law of God—that our spiritual eye

may properly affect our hearts ; and truth in its power brighten on the soul. Happy Preacher, when this is the case ! Happy frame ! now he presents such, and *only* such objects, as are proper to excite those *Affections* in his Hearers, which are just and reasonable, suited to their several conditions, and worthy an immortal soul ; *such*, as may be raised and exercised with the greatest safety, even in the highest degree.

This brings us to consider *the Affections themselves*—These are such as were felt, most deeply felt, and powerfully expressed, not only by the Apostles and Prophets, but by their Divine Master in his Sermons and Discourses. We shall speak of *these Affections* under the Characters of *Love, Hatred, Hope, Fear, Joy, and Sorrow* ; together with all those mixed *Affections*, such as *Compassion, Admiration, Zeal, and reverential Awe*.

Now who can read the following Passages, without being abundantly satisfied of this great Truth ? (let it be remembered, that we are treating here of the *Affections* of Christ chiefly as a *Preacher*)—"In the last Day, that great DAY of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink ;" John vii. 37. Who can help discovering here *the Zeal of his heavenly Father's House that eat him up*—the strong *Affections* of *Love, Pity, Friendship, and Benevolence*, which filled and fired his great, generous, and tender Soul ! We are told, in Mark iii. 5. that Christ *looked round about* on the Scribes and Pharisees "with *ANGER*, being *grieved* for the hardness of their hearts"—with *anger* at their sins, with *sorrow* for the dreadful consequences. In another place, the same Evangelist tells us—"he *SIGHED* deeply in his Spirit ;" Mark viii. 12.

But of all other *Affections*, *COMPASSION* appears most prevalent in the heart of Christ : he was not only now and then *grieved* and *sorry* for the sins and miseries

miseries of mankind, but, as the Prophet expresses it, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah liii. 3.)—*one*, who seemed to be composed of *grief* and *sorrow*.

When the blessed Jesus cast his eyes upon the Multitude, “he was moved with COMPASSION on them, because they fainted.” This *Compassion* was the *moving* cause of all that he did and suffered in our room and stead, as God-Man-Mediator — and of all his thoughts, words and actions, as a Minister. Who can help being *moved* to see him, who had at all times the most perfect government of his *Affections*, “TOUCHED with the feeling of our infirmities!” — the ROCK OF AGES *moved*! Yes; our great High-Priest had “COMPASSION on the ignorant, and on them that *were* out of the way;” Matt. ix. 36. Heb. v. 2.

At another time, we are told, that “Jesus rejoiced in Spirit;” Luke x. 21. But what *Love* and *Affection* may we suppose filled his Soul, when he pronounced that heavenly salutation in meeting his Disciples—“All Hail!” Matt. xxviii. 9.

Of all the Preachers in the world, the Apostle Paul seemed to come the nearest to his Divine Master, in *Affection* in general: but in this *Affection* in particular — what can be more solemn, and more pathetical, than his appeal to God, in behalf of the Philippian Church—“God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ;” Phil. i. 8. Hence it is recorded, in 2 Cor. xi. 29.—“Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?” His Heaven-enlarged Heart appeared to be in unison with Christ and all his Church; and his Soul seemed to be made up of *Sympathy*, like Jeremiah — “for the hurt of the Daughter of God’s People *he was* hurt;” *he rejoiced* with



*with them that rejoiced, and mourned with them that mourned.*

But we intend more fully to explain all these *Affections*, and at the same time trace them, as so many streams, to their Fountain Head—this is comprehended in one word—LOVE. LOVE! (if we may be allowed the figure) is the main spring of the soul, which sets all the others in motion:—For instance—Is the object, which we are conversant with, good, amiable, beautiful? It excites LOVE. Doth an object of a contrary nature—evil, ugly, deformed, present itself, so as to hinder our enjoyment of the same? Out of this very *Affection* arises HATRED. Do we discover a prospect of being delivered from evil, and enjoying the good, which our hearts are fixed upon? Out of this LOVE arises HOPE. Doth the prospect vanish, or are we in danger of losing what we enjoy, or of coming short of what we expect? Our *Hopes* give up the Ghost; FEAR, like an armed man, taketh possession of the soul. Have we, on the other hand, a full assurance, or are we in the possession of the object we love? The affection we feel is JOY. Have we actually lost the good we possessed? Are we apprehensive of losing it? Or is evil present? SORROW *fills our hearts*. Do we realize human misery? LOVE unites with SORROW, and becomes COMPASSION. Is the object, which we are conversant with, *great and wonderful*? It excites ADMIRATION. Do we consider this object as neglected, slighted, insulted, dishonoured? This kindles all the *Fire*, and enflames the whole soul with ZEAL.

2d. We shall endeavour to shew, that Religion and Christianity, above all other things, are adapted to raise the *Affections* of the soul to the highest pitch and tone—to afford the most rational and sublime entertainment, and the best, noblest Work and Employment

ployment for men and Angels to all Eternity. For instance.

1. As to *Love* and *Esteem*—what object is there in Heaven or Earth so adapted, so *peculiarly* adapted, to excite and raise these *Affections* to the highest degree, as the infinite Beauty, Goodness, and Amiability of him, who is “the Desire of all Nations”—*the beloved of the Father—the worship of Angels*—“the chiefest among ten thousand”—and “altogether lovely?”

2. Do we admire, *justly* admire things which are great, vast, sublime, and wonderful? What in Time, or to all Eternity, can possibly be compared, with the great “Mystery of Godliness?” Ask the three highly-favoured Apostles, who “were with him in the Holy Mount,” and “Eye-witnesses of his Majesty.”—Ask the “innumerable company of Angels,” and “the general Assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven.”

3. Is the absence of good, and presence of evil attended with grief?—should not the loss of the Divine Image, which our souls have suffered—should not the absence of him, whose “loving kindness is better than life”—“in *whose* Presence is fulness of joy,” and at whose “right-hand are pleasures for evermore;” and the presence of Sin, our greatest Enemy; *Sin*, the greatest Evil; *Sin*, the only cause of all other temporal, spiritual, and eternal *Evils*, fill us with the most pungent, deepest sorrow?

4. Have we any “Bowels of COMPASSION”—what should move them like to human misery? A sinful world is a miserable world; and can we cast our eyes around us, in any corner of the Globe; or turn them inwards upon ourselves, and not find sufficient matter to touch, and draw forth this tender *Affection* of the soul, in the highest degree?

5. Does

5. Does an assurance, or the actual possession of any good excite Joy? The full assurance, the actual possession of *Christ in our hearts by faith* must excite "Joy unspeakable."

6. Do we hate things which are ugly, odious, and deformed? What is there in the whole Universe—what can be found, in Earth or Hell, so *ugly, odious, and deformed*, as the detestable, execrable cause of all *deformity* in the whole Creation; as the *abominable thing* which God's soul *loathes*; which hath turned Angels into Devils, and exposed mankind to the *hatred* and *displeasure* of him, whose Majesty and Excellency, Glory and Beauty, overawes and captivates the Saint and the Seraph; and who will remain Love itself, and *infinitely lovely*, to Eternity?

7. Say—does not this afford the strongest reason for a sacred ZEAL for his Glory, and our everlasting enjoyment? Is the Chief, the supreme Good—Is the infinite, the Eternal Fair neglected, slighted, insulted, dishonoured? and should we not, like the burning Seraphims, kindle into an holy Flame, which hath the most vehement heat? Should we not maintain a ZEAL, in proportion to his infinite Greatness and Excellencies—the injury that our Sins have done him, and the invaluable worth of our own and others immortal souls?

8. Can any thing enliven our HOPE like the Promises, the "exceeding great and precious Promises," of a "God, that cannot lie"—the *Promise* of Christ, Heaven, and a World of eternal Glory?—Or,

9. Can any thing awaken, rouse, and alarm our FEAR, like the Terrors of Death, Judgment, and eternal Misery?

3d. We shall now endeavour to point out the best manner of expressing the *Affections*, in the *Delivery* of a *Sermon*; in *Tones*, *Looks*, and *Gestures*, so as properly to *affect* the hearts of all our Hearers.



In order to set this in the clearest point of light, we shall here suppose the Divine Orator to have entered the Pulpit, and just about to engage in his Work; that he hath chosen a Subject of the greatest Importance, even the recovery of mankind by Jesus Christ—*This*, above all others, is *particularly* adapted to touch the inmost springs of the soul: the *Matter* is Divine Love; the whole of his Discourse made up of LOVE: he understands, and hath *drank deep* himself into the *Spirit* of his Text: like Elihu and Paul, *the Spirit within*—"the love of Christ constraineth him:" nor is any *Affection* here so just and reasonable as LOVE—LOVE, all inflamed, drawn forth and exercised in the highest degree! But in what manner doth he express it? Methinks I see him stand in the sacred Place; he casts his eyes respectfully around the Congregation—I read the *Spirit* of his Subject in his *Countenance*—I behold one of the *burning Seraphims* chearfully hastening his flight from the *Altar of Atonement*, "having a live Coal in his hand," and *touching his lips*: I listen: I hear him summon up all the Daughters of Music—his "tongue is the Pen of a ready writer"—his accents are soft, sweet, melodious, pleasant, and delightful, as *the sound of the Jubilee*, or *the song of Angels*: Now he dwells upon his adorable Person, and talks about the Riches, "the *unsearchable* RICHES of his glorious Kingdom, and the honour of his excellent Majesty."

ADMIRATION—a *sacred Admiration* overspreads and covers him: The whole man is expanded, enlarged, enraptured (for such is the effect of the glorious Subject upon his Heaven-won soul) every Word, every Look, every Motion, speak the Language of Wonder, Love, and Esteem: He strives to praise the Lord "according to his excellent Greatness," and would fain move Heaven and Earth with his Subject. But here he feels, *deeply* feels, that his highest

Notes can never reach the infinite Dignity of him, “ *who* is exalted above all Blessing and Praise :” the Sense, the *realizing* Sense of this fills him with

A REVERENTIAL AWE.—Here (like Moses, when “ the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of *the burning, unconsuming* Bush ;” or, as Joshua and Isaiah, when they saw the same adorable Personage) his soul feels the deep impression : his whole man is overawed, as “ Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle :” the slow solemn utterance—the unvarying tones of voice—the composed gesture and action—even the profound pause and silence—every thing about him strongly marks and expresses something like what the Patriarch declared—“ How *awful* is this place ! Surely, this is none other but the House of God, and the Gate of Heaven ;” Gen. xxviii. 17. Under the influence of the same devout and Christ-like temper, he realizes the sinful and miserable state and condition of those, whose *minds are blinded by the God of this world* ; who see “ no form nor comeliness in *the Saviour*, that *they* should desire him.” Here indignation (for he cannot bear to see the object of his love neglected, slighted and dishonoured) here an holy *indignation* against Sin —

A sacred ZEAL for the Glory of his Lord, and their Salvation, burns with a most vehement heat : He *cries aloud, and spares not* ; he *shews God’s People* “ their transgressions, and the House of Jacob their sins :” Here he is, in reality, a Boanerges : I feel the fiery sparkling eye ; his terrific accents sound *terrible* as the *roaring* of a lion, the *thundering* of Sinai, or the more dreadful *clangour* of the last trumpet ; now he lays to heart the danger that his Hearers are in of being *lost* eternally.

FEAR, a *sympathetick fear* and dread possesses all his powers : unable to support himself, he shuddering  
starts

starts from the tremendous thought; the pallid countenance; the sickened eye; the opened, uplifted, shrinking hand; the weak, dejected, hesitating accents, which quiver and tremble upon his faltering tongue—all speak the deep and inward commotion of his soul.

But doth he discover any concern in his Hearers for *the one thing needful*?—Are they enquiring for “the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward?”—Are they in the case of the poor condemned *Publican*, or the convinced trembling *Goaler*? *This* inspires him with HOPE on their account; his soul enters the Heaven of Heavens; ranges the eternal world, and realizes those things which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man; the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”—and he comes back full of immortality! And Oh! with what ardour doth he grasp the longed-for moment! With what animated strains of celestial Eloquence doth he address his Auditory! How cheerfully doth he present Christ, Heaven, and a World of Glory to their view! The ready, quick, rapid, lively *accents*; the brightened, intense, smiling *countenance*; the wishful, affectionate *eye*, pointing to the place where the soul’s anchor is *cast*; seem to anticipate the blessedness that awaits the *redeemed*, who shall “come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting Joy upon their heads;” Isaiah li. 11. xxxv. 10.

Joy.—Oh! with what pleasure and delight doth he congratulate the Redeemer, and all his redeemed: Yes; he *rejoices* with the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls over his *returning Sheep*—with the Father of the Prodigal, and his returning Son. He interests Heaven and Earth in his Subject, and calls upon both to unite in his Song. The Language of his Soul is—“Sing, O ye Heavens; for the Lord hath



done it : shout, ye lower parts of the Earth : break forth into singing ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein : for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel ;" Isaiah xliv. 23. Here, as when " the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth between the Cherubims, came into the Camp" (1 Sam. iv. 4, 5.) or, as when " the Foundation of the Temple *was laid* ;" Ezra iii. 10—13. or, as when *Solomon was anointed King* ; 1 Kings i. 39, 40. Here the clear, full, flowing, pleasant, sweet and delightful Voice of Melody resounds.—But soon, ah ! too soon his Joy is darkened ; his Joy is turned into

SORROW.—His Hearers are Sinners : and it is much to be feared, that some of them are living and dying in their sins ; and that others are oppressed, distressed, afflicted, and deserted, which makes his Soul to melt into

PITY and COMPASSION.—His Bowels yearn over his Hearers, like him, who was " a man of sorrows," when he beheld the City of Jerusalem : if he speaks at all with his Voice (for his heart and his tongue are often as it were both in his eyes) it is rather in low, flexible, interrupted languid accents ; the mournful, Dove-like sweetness and cloudiness of Voice, of all others the most tender and affecting, enters the inmost feelings of their hearts.

GESTURE. The HEAD and COUNTENANCE.—Authors upon this Subject have very minutely and particularly described this part of *Eloquence* ; we mean, the various Motions, Looks and Gestures, arising from every Affection, as well as the *Tones of Voice*, in which they naturally express themselves.

A thorough understanding of our Subject—a due Impression of its Weight and Importance upon our own hearts—a strict guard against every thing formal and affected—a close observation of the best Speakers,  
and

and a just adoption of what is most becoming *us* in their Manner, with constant Practice, will be our best Guides and Instructors.—We shall therefore only just drop a few hints.

The FACE may with great propriety be compared to a mirror ; in which we may behold the various passions of the mind, as Love, Hatred, Hope, Fear, Joy, Sorrow, Zeal, Admiration, and Compassion. Agreeable to this, we read, in Neh. ii. 2. Eccles. vii. 3. of *a sad Countenance*—in Ezek. xxvii. 35. of *a troubled Countenance*—in Prov. xxv. 23. of “an angry Countenance”—and in Prov. xv. 13. of “a chearful Countenance ;” and if the heart is deeply affected, it must more or less appear in the *Looks and Gesture*, as well as *Voice* of the Preacher. It is impossible to realize “the things which belong unto *our Peace* ;” to speak of Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, and Eternity, with all its tremendous Miseries and Horrors, on the one hand ; and its Glories, Pleasures and Happiness, on the other, properly in the same manner : No ; like Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, *our Countenance will change* : Dan. vii. 28. iii. 19. Love naturally wears a comely and pleasing *Countenance* ; Hatred a forbidding, frowning, angry *Countenance* ; Hope a brightened, intense, smiling *Countenance* ; Fear a pallid *Countenance* ; Joy a chearful *Countenance* ; and Sorrow a sad *Countenance*.

Our EYES, as a window to the heart, will serve to discover what is within : Grief will cast a cloud upon them, and often fill them with tears ; Joy, like the Sun in the Heavens, dispels the gloom, and brightens the eyes.

VOICE. — The Scriptures mention a variety of kinds of VOICES : as a *distinct Voice* ; Neh. viii. 8. “a pleasant, sweet, *melodious Voice* ;” Ezek. xxxiii. 32. Cant. ii. 14. Isaiah li. 3. a *fluent Voice*, or a  
Tongue,

*Tongue*, as “the Pen of a ready writer;” Psalm xlv. 1. and of a *loud, strong Voice*; Isaiah xl. 9. lviii. 1. We also read of “the Voice of Weeping,” *Crying*, and *Lamentation*—of *Thanksgiving*—*Joy* and *Triumph*—and of the *Voice of Salvation*: Isaiah lxxv. 19. Psalm xxvi. 7. Job iii. 7. Jer. vii. 34. Psalm xlvii. 1. cxviii. 15.

From the places already referred to, it clearly appears just and consistent with Scripture, as well as Reason, to *vary our Voice, Countenance, and Gesture*, according to our Subject: and this will unavoidably be the case, as far as we understand and feel its weight, where there is no impediment in the organ of speech, if we speak naturally: for *as* there is certainly a wide difference between the various objects which are presented to our minds; *so* they affect, and ought to affect, our hearts, more or less, in proportion to their Nature and Importance, and our own Concerns with them; as true or false, great or little, good or evil; with love or hatred, hope or fear, joy or sorrow. As the *Language* of all these Affections are different; *so* the *Voice, Looks, and Gesture*, if natural, must be *different*; and will be expressive of the sentiments and feelings of our hearts, as they arise from the Subject. This manner of Delivery must, more or less, interest and affect our Auditory, in proportion to their Understanding, Imagination, Sensibility, or Affections.

In a word, herein consists all the Life, Power, Soul, and Spirit of ELOQUENCE—to understand our Subject thoroughly, to be fully convinced of its truth and reality, suitably affected with its weight and importance, and deliver ourselves accordingly. This is the best way (we mean as far as it respects ELOQUENCE) to instruct, convince, and edify—in short, to please, delight, astonish, conquer, subdue, reign, and triumph over the Hearts and Affections of ALL.

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